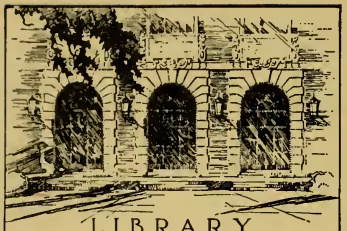

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THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS

THE

MARQUIS OF CARABAS

A Story of To-day

BY

AARON WATSON

AND

LILLIAS WASSERMANN

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1892

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THE

MARQUIS OF CARABAS

CHAPTER XVI.

AN AMERICAN GIRL.

'Your American friend is quite a character,' remarked Lord Cranbery to Luxmore a week afterwards, when paying another visit to the artist's studio. On this occasion he was accompanied by the Marquis of Carabas, whose admiration of the artist's wonderful draughtsmanship was considerably mixed with dislike of his method and his subjects.

'He is not the conventional loud-spoken man from the States at all,' Cranbery continued; 'I should like to see more of him.'

The artist shrugged his shoulders with a comic look of dismay.

'He is my old man of the sea at present,' he said plaintively; 'I really don't know what to do with him. He abuses England and everything that is English, and yet he stays among us as if he loved us.'

'A great many Americans are like that,' observed the Marquis. 'One wonders why they find so much delight in abusing us when they so like to be amongst us. I have noticed the same tendency in an even more marked degree in colonials.'

'He looks at everything in such a cool, indifferent, aggravating way,' said Luxmore; 'and his judgments are decidedly bold and peculiar.'

'As for instance?' Lord Cranbery inquired.

'Well, he is dissatisfied with Westminster Abbey, because it is full of monuments. The Houses of Parliament

are a great mistake in architecture. The Tower of London is quite unworthy of its reputation. The National Gallery might be worth visiting if it were first weeded out, the early Italian masters being sent to a dust-destructor and burned.'

'A sweeping reformer, truly,' laughed Cranbery.

'One never knows whether he is in jest or earnest,' the painter continued; 'he is always equally grave.'

'The American command of the facial muscles is a very remarkable national characteristic,' said the Marquis of Carabas. 'The circumstances which have produced it form, I apprehend, the most recent chapter in human development.'

'In which case,' said Luxmore, 'the latest and highest product of civilization is certainly Mr. Marc Aurelius Tidd, whose control over his own features, under any and all circumstances, is a subject for continual marvel.'

'But he is a gentleman,' Lord Cranbery said with decision.

'With variations. At the British Museum, the other day, I thought he would have picked a quarrel with a very quiet old gentleman—an eminent art critic, by the way—he behaved so exasperatingly.'

'Pray, how was that?'

'Well, he looked at all broken parts of the great statues, and declared that the Greeks ought to have known better than to have used stone or marble for their productions. Then he went on to observe that he had himself invented something—some abominable concoction of concrete and gutta-percha—which he was certain would prove far less perishable than this scrappy marble. He guessed that most of their stone mugs wanted washing badly. By the stone mugs this pagan actually meant to signify the splendid collection of antique pottery. The old gentleman I referred

to appeared fascinated with horror as Tidd poured out this wild and whirling talk, depreciating what he called the old Apollos and Vulcans, and prophesying the greater things in art to appear in the United States. The farce culminated in Mr. Tidd directly addressing himself to his horrified listener, whose angry gaze it pleased him to mistake for an expression of approval of his sentiments. "I guess," he said, "that's just about what you are thinking too, mister?" The old gentleman looked at him a moment as if he meant to rend him; then put all his capacity for satire and outraged indignation into a single glance, and turned scornfully away.'

'No doubt Mr. Tidd felt himself deservedly rebuked,' observed Cranbery.

'He simply grew a little more melancholy in expression than before, and murmured that he did expect the old boy would have shown fight; but it seemed that you might tread on the tail of the

British lion as much as you chose nowadays, and it wouldn't do more than growl.'

'To appear portentously grave whilst in reality indulging to its fullest extent the sense of humour is another American characteristic,' remarked Carabas.

'Oh, come, I have seen the same thing in our English circus clown!' exclaimed Cranbery.

'A circus clown is occasionally grave, but never humorous,' the Marquis rejoined.

'Mr. Tidd's jest will cost me dear enough,' said Luxmore. 'The indignant old gentleman at the British Museum is the uncle of Sir Robert Graham, and Sir Robert is one of my principal patrons. He had proposed to bring his uncle in two days' time to look at a picture he thought of buying—that Andromeda in the corner, in fact. Well, he did. The uncle recognised me at once, as I could see by the first glance at his face. He said very little about my work, but

somehow my poor Andromeda wouldn't go down. Sir Robert Graham deferred to his opinion—which is undoubtedly valuable—and the baronet, having expectations in that quarter, was doubly bound. You see? On the whole it is an expensive luxury to be seen with my American, as you call him.'

The artist spoke half jestingly, but there was a tone of annoyance underlying the humour, which caused Lord Cranbery to wonder why Luxmore should put himself out of the way to be civil to one who so evidently vexed him. The artist did not bear the reputation of being an entirely unselfish person, or that of one who is capable of any great degree of altruism.

'By the way, he appeared to know something of you, my lord,' said the artist, addressing the Marquis; 'at least, he knew about you, although he professed never to have seen you.'

'Knew of me?' repeated the Marquis in a tone of surprise; 'I don't remember to have

previously heard of such a person. You see, I am not like our friend here,' laughing and laying his hand upon Lord Cranbery's shoulder; 'I don't pride myself on cultivating all sorts and conditions of men.'

'Except for party purposes,' retorted Lord Cranbery instantly.

'He's a fellow that one finds it difficult to make out,' said the artist thoughtfully; 'but he certainly knows something which causes him to be particularly interested in your lordship. But if ever there was a silent, inward-minded, close-mouthed, artful fellow, that man's name is Marc Aurelius Tidd!'

There was a spice of malice in the speech, doubtless referable to the various times when Luxmore had applied — ever so insidiously — the pump-handle, to be foiled as dexterously by the cool self-possession of the Yankee.

The Marquis appeared to be pondering something in his mind, as he listened to the artist's last speech.

'Perhaps it is the same,' he muttered to himself.

Then he said aloud: 'Now that I think of it, there *was* an American mixed up in our family affairs in a rather singular fashion. I recollect that his name struck me at the time as a strange and unusual one. Mr. Luxmore, the solution of the mystery of your friend's interest in me is very simple. In all probability this gentleman is the same who was travelling in Alaska about the time when my unfortunate cousin was murdered, and who sent the news home, together with proofs of the death. If so, I ought certainly to call upon him in order to thank him for the trouble he then took on my account. I shall be very much indebted to you, Mr. Luxmore, if you will make inquiries whether my surmises as to his identity are correct or no. Had it not been for the service thus rendered, my succession would have been deferred indefinitely.'

Mr. Zachary Luxmore was rather piqued to find the mystery so easily solved. He loved gossip, and still more he loved to imagine scandal. There was very slight promise of gratification here.

A few evenings later Lord Cranbery was in a position to solve another mystery, namely, that of the artist's curious toleration of his American acquaintance. It was at a reception at Mrs. Montagu Bloffit's that the solution dawned upon him. Cranbery rather enjoyed the strange medley of guests he met at Mrs. Bloffit's 'at homes,' and was a pretty frequent visitor at her spick-and-span new mansion in Kensington, although many of the friends of his own class wondered a little at his taste.

And, indeed, it is true that the society there was apt to be—like Mr. Bloffit's pickles—a trifle mixed. Mr. Bloffit was a retired manufacturer, who had amassed an enormous fortune by the aid of the homely but savoury dainty afore-mentioned.

'Bloffit's Bango Relish' was about as well known as the soap of Pears or the pills of Beecham. Everywhere did large placards and posters advertise the admirable merits of that peppery compound. Some rival of Joshua Dean's had written a rhyme upon its wondrous powers, which rivalled in popularity the above-named poet's verses upon Smith's 'Aurora-vine':

> 'When mutton cold repels the taste,
> And threatens all domestic peace,
> Then Bango Relish saves from waste,
> And bids all woful discords cease.'

Pretty little pictures were designed by popular painters, who were paid fabulous prices for their works of art, depicting scenes wherein the Bango Relish could be best enjoyed. At the homely table of the artisan and in the sumptuous halls of the wealthy that pickle-bottle, with its conspicuous yellow label and blue lettering, might be observed, adding a grace to the festive scene or a solace to the sorrowing one.

But all these details were excessively distasteful to Mrs. Montagu Bloffit, who had insisted upon her husband resigning every connection with trade immediately upon his marriage with her.

Alas! the connection might be closed, but the name remained, and Bloffit would not hear of having that changed. It was an honest name, he said doggedly. He hadn't done anything to disgrace it, and he wasn't going to change it to please anybody. In every other particular he was ready to humour his wife, even to that of keeping quite in the background when her smart people filled the house to overflowing.

Mrs. Bloffit was young, pretty, and clever, and had lots of 'go' in her; consequently her parties were not to be despised. She had made up her mind to get on in society, and was ready and willing to eat any amount of humble pie in order to gain her object. Somehow or other she managed to secure all sorts of celebrities.

People, therefore — after the ungrateful fashion of society—found it convenient to accept her invitations when nothing better was going, and to refuse them under more favourable circumstances.

In the Bloffit household every fashionable craze grew and blossomed to its decay with fell luxuriance. The æsthetic followed swift upon the gorgeous; the Japanese was banished in turn by the prim comfort of Queen Anne.

Mrs. Bloffit had sufficient common-sense to engage a firm of decorators to furnish and decorate her reception rooms, and the result was a decided success, since she did not interfere, or persist in obtruding views of her own. The rest of the house was managed in a more heterodox manner, and many incongruities were apparent in consequence.

The severity of the Chippendale furniture was tempered by the introduction of Moorish rugs and hangings, and Louis

Quatorze contended vainly for pre-eminence with Japanese ornaments and decorations.

There was, as before remarked, a lot of 'go' about Mrs. Bloffit, and her parties were never dull. This, at least, could be honestly said for them. There was always a sufficient number of professional artistes engaged to make entertainment easy work. People sang, recited, talked, got up tableaux, did all sorts of lively things for the amusement of Mrs. Bloffit's guests, and little amateur talent was encouraged to bore people into unwilling applause.

Only one non-professional young lady sang on the particular occasion on which Lord Cranbery was present, and this only because people appeared positively to besiege her, so anxious did they seem that she should sing.

She was rather an unusual-looking girl, and, for some special reason of which Lord Cranbery was ignorant, attracted an uncommon amount of attention.

Not powerful, but peculiarly sweet and pathetic, her voice appeared to be exactly suited to the rendering of the little ballad which she sang, first in its original Spanish form, afterwards—in response to a special request from someone not afraid to avow ignorance of a foreign language—in a translation. The simple air was admirably harmonized, and the lady accompanied herself upon the mandoline. A sudden lull crept over the noisy crowd as the first low, passionate notes trembled forth :

'You will not listen to my lay ;
It strikes too sad a note, you say ;
And yet your eyes have veiled their fires,
As night falls when the sun retires,
While far your castle walls below
I hear the sad, dark river flow.

'Like stars set in the orange bloom,
The fireflies sparkle through the gloom ;
'Twere easy, if my love were light,
To sing a gladder song to-night.
But far your castle walls below
I hear the sad, dark river flow.

''Tis hard to smile, when in my breast
My heart beats high with wild unrest ;

Ah, dearest, bid me not depart ;
Unveil thine eyes, and ease my heart.
While far your castle walls below
I hear the sad, dark river flow.'

The singer was evidently either a favourite or a subject of curiosity, for quite a crowd of people flocked round to thank her when she concluded.

Lord Cranbery thought he had never heard singing which conveyed so much meaning and intensity of emotion to him ; and a great musical critic who stood near confirmed his favourable verdict.

'It is something to hear an amateur sing as though she were not ashamed of having ordinary human emotions,' the critic remarked. 'Now, the usual drawing-room ballad vocalist is an abomination—and why ? Because, be it he or she, there is no comprehension of the meaning of the words that are uttered. A wild and passionate outburst is turned into a pretty — oh yes, a pretty and well-taught melody, and then they say that Tosti or Marzials is

"quite too lovely!" I have not the patience to listen to such idiotic performances. But this young lady—she is a woman. She knows what she is saying, and is not afraid to show that she does know.'

Lord Cranbery made a tour of the rooms, and when he returned the young lady in question was standing near the door, talking to his friend Luxmore, who had just arrived.

Cranbery had—with all his occasional austerity—an eye for a pretty face, and the one belonging to the lady of the song struck him as being peculiarly bewitching. As soon as he could gain the hearing of his hostess, he inquired the name of the singer.

'The young lady in amber silk talking to Mr. Luxmore?' repeated Mrs. Montagu Bloffit rather abstractedly—for her thoughts were excessively engaged. She expected a Cabinet Minister, a foreign Potentate, and the celebrated Russian Prima Donna, about whom everyone was raving at that period, and these expectations kept her on the tip-toe

of suspense, with scarce sufficient calmness left to enable her to perform the necessary civilities to the remainder of her guests. Her eyes moved in the direction indicated by Lord Cranbery, and then they suddenly brightened.

'Oh, Celia? Why, don't you know her yet? It is Miss Tidd, the American heiress—the last one imported, you know! She is lovely, don't you think?—and very clever and intellectual also. She is a particular friend of mine, and of course I shall have great pleasure in introducing you.'

Cranbery assented with alacrity. Why, this must be the very girl who had been spoken of in the studio by her brother and Luxmore—the Celia who 'fancied she would like to marry into the aristocracy.' Well, certainly, so far as looks went, there were some grounds for her ambition, and, from what the artist had hinted and Mrs. Montagu Bloffit had just plainly said, she had sufficient wealth to make the thing feasible.

And Luxmore? The little artist was bound to be polite to the brother of such a charming girl, and a girl with whom he was so evidently *épris*.

Mr. Zachary Luxmore did not look in the highest degree delighted when Mrs. Montagu Bloffit touched Miss Tidd's arm and went through the ceremony of introduction.

'Celia, my dear, you will, I am sure, be interested in Lord Cranbery's conversation. He is so well informed. There is scarcely a social movement of which he cannot give you some account. Miss Tidd is very much interested in England and in all our doings here, my lord.'

The anxious hostess, having thus done her duty, fled back swiftly to her post near the door. Miss Tidd looked at Lord Cranbery with a scrutinizing glance.

Her eyes were large and brown, and wore, like those of her brother, an expression of languid and elusive melancholy.

There the likeness ended. Celia was of the finest type of Transatlantic beauty, graceful, sylph-like, *spirituelle*. Her forehead was low, but broad; and, in contrast to the frizzed and becurled tresses of the majority of the ladies present, her dark hair was simply parted in the centre, and swept in natural waves to the back of the exquisitely proportioned head, where it was knotted carelessly in classic style. In fact, her head had a remarkable likeness to the Clytie, a likeness which she may possibly have recognised and encouraged.

Lord Cranbery wondered if it were one of the Paris gowns spoken of by Marc Aurelius that she was wearing. It was indeed a wonderful creation of Felix or Worth, and suited her to perfection; the amber and pale rose tints so delicately blended, and so suggestive of a sunset, were precisely the tints required to show up the ivory paleness of her complexion and the warm darkness of her eyes and hair.

'I am glad you find us amusing,' began Lord Cranbery, for want of something better to say.

Miss Tidd smiled a slow, dreamy smile, that again bore with it a reminiscence of Marc Aurelius.

'Not amusing—no—hardly amusing,' replied Celia softly; and Cranbery remarked with pleasure that the sharp, nasal, metallic tones associated inseparably in his mind with American femininity were in the case of Miss Tidd conspicuous by their absence. Someone has said that no American woman can speak from the chest, but at least, if Celia's were head tones, she managed them with wondrous skill.

'But things can be interesting without being amusing, can't they, now?' she asked.

Lord Cranbery assented, and after a few minutes of light society talk they drifted by imperceptible degrees into a serious conversation of quite a different character. If Lord Cranbery was interested in all social

problems, Celia Tidd was evidently conversant with them to a much greater extent than he, although she professed to know very little about anything. Several facts about her life came out in the course of conversation. During the quiet, retired existence passed with two old people (for Celia was the child of her parents' old age), her sole recreation had been reading, and to this she had seriously devoted herself. Then, after the death of her father and mother, she had spent some months in Boston, the centre of culture and of the universe, and was *au courant* with all the newest thought of the times.

'Does your brother not accompany you to-night?' asked Lord Cranbery at length, looking about him for the conspicuous figure of the American.

Celia shook her graceful head.

'Marc is a strange creature, Lord Cranbery. He hates society. Indeed, I often think he dislikes people altogether, and

would prefer to live, like Thoreau, in the woods, away from civilization. As for inducing him to come to this sort of thing—— But he is a right-down good fellow, all the same, and there isn't anything I want he doesn't get for me.'

It was irresistible, but the thought of her social ambition flitted like a shadow across Lord Cranbery's inner consciousness. He dismissed it, however, as another proof of practical joking upon the part of the American, and only regretted that the latter had not the good taste to refrain from including his charming sister amongst the victims of his pleasantries.

Meanwhile Mr. Zachary Luxmore had subsided into a sullen silence, but watched Lord Cranbery 'making the running with the heiress,' as he phrased it to himself, as though unable to tear himself from the spot.

'You are quiet, Luxmore,' remarked the young lord. 'It is not often that one sees you in a pensive mood.'

'No, indeed!' exclaimed Miss Tidd gaily. 'Mr. Luxmore is the gayest and most amusing of companions. I know nobody, and he kindly condescends to enlighten my ignorance. He is as good as *Truth* or the *World*, to say nothing of the *Court Circular*. And, really, it's astonishing how soon the gilt rubs off the gingerbread when you come to hear all about these smart people!' she added, in a pensive tone. 'They all appear to have done those things they ought not to have done, and to have left undone those they ought to have done.'

'That's Luxmore! Don't believe him, Miss Tidd! At any rate, don't take him too seriously. He's a cynic, and sees everything through green spectacles.'

'Perhaps it's my liver,' replied Luxmore rather spitefully, and Lord Cranbery first coloured, then laughed.

'That is too bad of you, Luxmore! If you knew what it is to suffer! They all chaff me because I am unfortunate enough

to be dyspeptic, Miss Tidd. So, in addition to my natural misfortune, I have to endure the raillery of my friends.'

Celia looked pitifully at the victim of dyspepsia. There was no raillery in her glance, only a very sympathetic appreciation of Lord Cranbery's misfortunes.

'Ah, we do not laugh at dyspepsia in the States,' she said, in her soft, slow tones. 'We know too much about it there to make it a subject of ridicule.'

Lord Cranbery felt consoled under his sufferings. How sweet is sympathy, so expressed!

The night came to a close only too quickly. Mr. Luxmore happened to be taking leave at the same time as himself, and as both men were walking, and their ways lay in the same direction, neither could escape from the other's society without a marked avoidance of it.

The little artist was in a vindictive mood, and scarcely knew where to begin to indulge his ill temper.

'So you have promised to take Miss Tidd to the People's Palace, and also to do some "slumming" with her at the East-End,' he broke out at last, in an irritable tone of voice. 'Well, well; all I hope is that you won't catch typhoid in some of those badly-drained rat-holes!'

It was a kindly wish, but the way in which it was uttered made it sound like a malediction. In fact, it rather resembled the utterance of the river-pilot who, being forbidden to swear, always ended his 'Bless you' by an after-thought—'*You know what I mean!*'

If Luxmore expected to frighten Cranbery out of the projected expedition to the East-End, his effort was in vain, for the young nobleman merely laughed.

'What's wrong with you, Luxmore?' he asked, with perfect good humour. 'There's nothing in an outing like that—especially with an American girl. You know they

have a good deal more freedom about them than our girls.'

'Doubtless. And they take every advantage of it, apparently,' replied the artist, with bitter emphasis.

The truth was that the little man was so beside himself with jealousy that he scarce knew what he said or did.

'It does them no harm,' was Lord Cranbery's quick reply. 'Just see what a charming creature Miss Tidd is! Where will you find an English girl of the same age with so much intelligence, vivacity, breadth of view?'

'Take care, my friend! What would Lady Nora say to such enthusiasm?'

Lord Cranbery started, then drew himself up very stiffly.

'I do not understand you,' he said; 'and I will bid you good-night.'

CHAPTER XVII.

CELIA TIDD AMUSES HERSELF.

It was obvious that Mr. Zachary Luxmore did not desire that Lord Cranbery and the sister of Mr. Marc Aurelius Tidd should be thrown too much together. It was obvious even to Lord Cranbery himself, who was angry at what he believed to be the artist's impertinence, and amused at its so clearly-disclosed motive.

What man was ever deterred from seeking the society of a fair woman by finding that his attentions were distasteful to some other man who was merely on the list of her acquaintances? In Luxmore's disclosure of jealousy Lord Cranbery found for himself an

incitement to cultivate his present slight knowledge of Marc Aurelius Tidd and his beautiful sister. To his way of thinking, no child of sixteen could have had less of the woman of the world in her composition than had this gentle-voiced, *spirituelle* American girl. She scarcely seemed to know that she was admired, and wore her smart gowns with an air of the simplest composure, as though toilets by Worth and Felix had been her accustomed garb from childhood.

Matters of grave import were those that occupied the mind of Celia Tidd, not stupid flirtations. She was deeply interested in everything ; wishful to have the most correct information ; anxious to do all she could to help those whose position required amelioration.

There was so much, she said, in which Lord Cranbery could assist her, since he was so very, very kind as to volunteer his services. And for the first time in his life Cranbery found himself an authority ; found

himself unhesitatingly accepted at his own valuation ; nay, above it, rather, for, with all his self-importance, Lord Cranbery was in reality a very simple and humble-minded individual.

But if Celia had meant to flatter him she could not have gone to work more skilfully than when she set him the task of Mentor. They had all laughed at him at home, and at the house of his uncle, the Duke. He was amazed to find what a lot he really knew, now that there was a sympathetic listener to bring it out.

So it came to pass that Lord Cranbery became a very frequent visitor at the Hotel Métropole, where the Tidds had engaged a very handsome suite of apartments. Celia made use of him as escort almost as frequently as of her brother, who clung to his hermit-like ways, and lived as unconventional a life in the heart of London as he had done in the backwoods of his native country or in the wilds of Africa.

'You are amusing yourself tolerably well, Celia,' he said one day, when she asked him to accompany her to a concert at St. James's Hall; 'I guess there's no need for me to play propriety. But don't you forget what I told you about that young sprig of aristocracy you go fooling round with. He's spoken for—family affair, you know; tolerably pretty girl, too. I saw her riding in the Row one day. Looks as though she'd some go in her—more fire and less starch than most of them. Don't make him unhappy, there's a good girl! Game isn't worth the candle!'

Celia looked at him curiously, laughed, then put her arm around his neck and kissed him with sudden vehemence.

'You are a dear old soul, Marc,' she said softly; 'but I can't live without a bit of amusement. It won't do him any harm. He wants something to arouse him—to take him out of himself, and—and a "family affair" will never do that!'

Marc Aurelius shook his head.

'He's a nice sort of a fellow. Let him alone, Celia.'

'But I must have someone to take me about, and show things to me,' pouted the spoilt beauty.

Poor Lord Cranbery! Had he chanced to overhear the true position he held in the fair Celia's estimation, it might have done much to cure him of his liking for her company.

'Besides,' she said, 'he really does tell me things, you know! He has shown me the Prime Minister, and Mr. Gladstone, and Henry Irving, and——'

'I know all about it, Celia! Let him alone.'

'Will you come with me, then? Come now, to the concert. We are to have several modern compositions.'

He cast a reproachful look at her, and lighted a cigar.

'No, Celia, my dear! There are limits—even to my endurance. I have heard that

sort of thing. Once is enough. Bad imitation of a menagerie! Band playing outside. Lions join in when trombones have aroused deep emotions in their breasts; then comes feeding-time, and the rest of the beasts roar out the chorus. Prefer the wild beasts in their native haunts, Celia!'

'Well, don't blame me, then, if Lord Cranbery is more gallant than you!'

'I *will* take you — there!' said the brother suddenly; 'and probably we shall see Mrs. Montagu Bloffit, or some other of your friends, in whose care I can leave you. Perhaps you are right, Celia. I ought to show up with you sometimes, to prevent fools chattering. Not that anything on God's earth will do that—much!'

When Lord Cranbery called, therefore, it was to find that Miss Tidd had gone to the concert, escorted by her brother.

Strange that upon the receipt of this intelligence he should feel so disappointed and miserable. Because she had sometimes

lately given him the privilege of accompanying her to certain places of amusement, was that a reason why he should expect to do so always? Bah! what a fool he was!

So Cranbery reflected with a doleful face. Suddenly he brightened. After all, Piccadilly was not inaccessible, and if she had not intended him to follow her there, why should she leave so carefully-worded a message? As this brilliant thought struck the young nobleman he hailed a hansom, and followed in the wake of the Americans, stopping on the way at a florist's to buy a buttonhole bouquet for his personal decoration, a thing rather unusually significant in this gravely-attired and serious-minded philanthropist.

It was not long before he espied those for whom he was looking amongst the bevy of fashionable people at St. James's Hall, who were enduring the performance with more or less stoicism, according as they

professed to be enamoured of the latest fashion in music or not.

Some, really interested, listened with attention; others took the opportunity of discussing private affairs, with that callous indifference to the comfort of their neighbours which is met with even in those who ought by right to be well bred. A few gazed listlessly around, and only awakened at the end of each piece to applaud rapturously what they neither understood nor cared for.

Mrs. Montagu Bloffit was there, in eager search for novelty, while close to her sat Celia Tidd, looking serious and charming in a Paris bonnet.

Marc Aurelius was there also; for, once entangled in Mrs. Bloffit's society, he did not find it so easy to make his escape as he had innocently imagined. It was not often that Mrs. Montagu Bloffit managed to get hold of the great traveller, and she stuck to him, therefore, like a limpet to a rock.

She had been very kind and useful to his sister, and he could not be rude, so he sat on, his eyes half closed, looking the picture of a man bored. Whenever a strange and dramatic chord clashed out from the band he heaved a deep sigh, and changed his position slightly ; but for the most part he appeared half asleep.

After Lord Cranbery joined the party, or, at least, came as close to them as the arrangement of seats would permit, the American made no further effort to leave.

After seeing Mrs. Bloffit to her carriage, they all walked home together, and on the way one of Mr. Tidd's eccentric moods took possession of him. He began declaiming against the monotony of public statues, and suggesting all sorts of absurd alterations.

'Now look here, Celia! What can be more ridiculous than to behold a hero in exactly the same attitude for ever and ever? To see him bestriding a tame or a fiery charger, as the case may be? Or a states-

man clenching his fist on a roll of parchment, till one longs to see him throw it in the face of the world for a change? And then those bronze lions! I reckon one gets tired of them pretty soon—weary, stolid, peaceful beasts, with the same stupid, unchangeable expressions. What we want nowadays is motion, life, action! There can be no grace or interest without motion. Now, if those lions could be rendered lively, if they could be fitted up with machinery inside, so as to make them lash their tails and roar at intervals, just see what a fund of interest and amusement would be provided for the public, at a small outlay.'

'Don't be absurd, Marc!' remonstrated Celia, laughing.

'It isn't absurd at all, I think. Lord Cranbery, you are always talking about the problem of the street arabs. Why don't you do something to arouse them, and keep the poor little beggars from thinking too much about their empty stomachs and

shivering bodies. If you only keep them merry you need not fear their doing mischief. I know what I'm talking about, though I don't profess philanthropy. I go about amongst them, and notice their cheeky ways.'

'He may not profess philanthropy, but he certainly practises something very like it,' interrupted Celia, with a bright look at Lord Cranbery.

There was one thing evident to any bystander, and that was that between the brother and sister was the most perfect love and good-fellowship.

'Marc is the best-hearted man I know, and hates to see children suffer, above all things.'

'Nonsense, Celia! Don't give Lord Cranbery a wrong impression of me. I'm too lazy to do much in that way. It's too much trouble. Besides, it's against my principles. But what I was going to say is that they must have fun. Just see how

they flock together when anything is going on! How they delight in the fountains in Trafalgar Square! And a clockmaker's window when a clock with movable figures is shown—what a crowd gathers about it! Poor chaps! they get tired of seeing their old stone men everlastingly in the same attitudes, and I guess I'm tired of them, too! We ought to aim at motion—perpetual, if possible, but at all events occasional. A go-ahead world has no patience with dummies.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

MULLIGAN'S COURT.

It so happened, upon a certain hot, sweltering July day, when courts and alleys teeming with life poured forth their myriads of human beings to pant for breath in wider thoroughfares, that Lord Cranbery went to a place called Mulligan's Court, bent upon a benevolent mission.

An old blind man of respectable birth, who lived there, had been recommended to him as a fitting inmate for an institution with which he was connected. Lord Cranbery had learned sufficient of the wicked ways of men to hesitate about taking things on trust, and accordingly set out to ascertain the truth of the story for himself.

Mulligan's Court was not situated in a locality that he was familiar with, and it was by no means a place that was easy to find. Lord Cranbery inquired of a policeman, and took so many turns to the right and so many turns to the left under his direction; but the prospect of finding Mulligan's Court seemed as far off as ever when all was done.

A young woman was mending sacks at a door in a dismal street to which he had come. She had fine, dark eyes and luxuriant black hair; but her face was puffed and discoloured. It bore the records of old blows, of former debauches, of a life of uncontrolled viciousness, without doubt; yet she was still young, and a few years ago might even have been attractive. An idea that some of the attractions remained was discernible in the smirk, trailing off into a leer, with which she accompanied her reply to Lord Cranbery's question.

'Mulligan's Court? How should I

know?' she said. 'Perhaps I might remember if so be as I had a glass of something to drink, guv'nor. One forgets things mending sacks, one does.'

'Surely a girl like you should not drink?' Lord Cranbery observed.

'Oh, ger! Shouldn't I, though, if I had the chance! This is slavery, this is, mending sacks. Look at them hands! That's pleasure, that is, drinking and forgetting it all! Give me a shilling, guv'nor, and I'll show you Mulligan's Court.'

Lord Cranbery placed a half-crown piece in her hand, and would have said something of the sinfulness of intoxication, but she gave him no opportunity to speak.

'This is Mulligan's Court,' she said, almost pushing him into a narrow entry close at hand. 'You're one o' them slummers, I suppose? Good luck to you, guv'nor; I'm off to drink your 'ealth!' and she threw down her large, heavy needle on the sack she had been mending, and ran off

at her best speed to spend Cranbery's injudicious half-crown in the most fiery liquid that money could procure.

Mulligan's Court was, in the first place, a narrow, dark entry, steaming with filthy odours, and this led into a somewhat wider space, where a strip of the gray London sky was discernible between the tops of tall and half-ruinous houses. Mothers sat screaming, on doorsteps, at children in the festering gutter which ran through the centre of the court. A woman was belabouring her husband, and asseverating that she would scratch his eyes out, because he had brought nothing home but a drunken carcase. Human creatures leaned out of upper windows and swore at each other across the narrow, reeking, pestilent space. There was a large population in Mulligan's Court—a population most crowding and bulging during the day, a population that thinned off into the streets rapidly as night approached.

In the far-off country the summer was a pleasant fact in the lives of happy and idle people. Green leaves clustered thick upon the trees, and the delicious shadows cast by these tempered the sun's fierce rays. Beside purling streams, or within sound of the sleepily rippling wavelets of the shimmering ocean, life was a pleasant idyl.

But here, in the heart of this great city, summer was but another evil to be endured, another item in the sum of human suffering.

What did this tired, gasping, crowded, festering mass of humanity know of the beauty of the season? What of nature at all, save, indeed, human nature, of which there was too much at all times? The streets were its paradise, the gutters its purling streams.

No time had these people to develop any beauty in their lives, or any virtue in themselves; they were too tightly packed together for that. If some puny, sickly flower of love or tenderness did struggle

into existence, it had no room to develop, but died an early death, crushed into the sickening soil of the place.

Lord Cranbery was not allowed to pass free of comment. Two rough-looking men, lounging in a doorway, watched him curiously.

'D'ye twig that bloke?' queried one of them, removing the short black pipe from his lips to point with it to Cranbery's slim, well-appointed figure. 'He's a swell, but a 'arf-baked one, to my idea. I come across 'im once when I was workin' orf a spree. Expect I looked down in the mouth, for I'm blest if the d——d fool didn't hoffer me a dinner-pill!—a dinner-pill, mind yer!' And the man burst into a loud and derisive laugh. 'What d'ye say to that for a lark? Sed as 'ow it 'ud do my innards no end of good.'

His friend laughed at the joke.

'And did yer swaller it?' he asked.

The other shook his head emphatically.

'Catch me a hupsettin' of my hinternal

arrangements with doctor's stuff!' he replied, with emphasis. 'I know better than that, Joe Muggins. All the dinners I get won't do me no harm, you take yer solid oath of that!'

There was a solemn significance in the way the speaker's friend repeated his shake of the head.

'No fear,' he said in turn. 'I'd take 'arf their hailments along with 'arf their dinners any time. He'd a long sight better ha' given ye the dinner and kept the pill for himself, Mike.'

'But he ain't 'arf a bad sort, bless yer 'art!' admitted Mike, with considerable reluctance; for it is so much pleasanter to blame than to praise those who are better off. 'He'd not stand by like some on 'em and laugh while a chap died of starvation. But he's only 'arf baked, as I sed afore. That's wot's the matter with him.'

Meanwhile Lord Cranbery accomplished

his mission of mercy, and then, being told of another sad case, entered a house in the court to seek it out.

Up the stairs, slippery with grease, and where the rails had been torn off for firewood, the young nobleman went warily, and, mistaking his direction in the dim twilight that reigned in the wretched place, he stumbled into the wrong room. And there a most unexpected sight met his eyes. He wondered whether he were asleep or awake. What masquerade was this upon which he had stumbled? Surely that vision could not be Celia Tidd, the woman who was even then in his thoughts?

Yet Celia Tidd it was. But this was a new Celia, one with whom he was as yet unacquainted; certainly not the woman of the world, the finished coquette whom Luxmore had denounced; not even the pretty spoilt beauty who went 'slumming' for an hour's amusement, or to kill idle time. A Celia more lovely and winsome than all the

rest ; a womanly woman, with a big motherly heart, to whom children naturally clung and nestled.

She was sitting on a low stool in a clean but barely-furnished little room. Her dress was tucked up, and her sleeves rolled to her elbows, and with her pretty, white, capable-looking hands she was engaged in the task of washing a child of some two years of age—a chubby, rosy urchin, who kicked, and splashed, and crowed as though tubbing were the most delicious of imaginable frolics.

Lord Cranbery stood for a moment in amazement, then with a quick gesture of apology withdrew.

Celia gave a little scream as she recognised him, then laughed, and sent the old woman who owned the room out to tell him that if he would come back in five minutes he should see the baby.

He stared at the old woman quite blankly.

'How is it—does Miss Tidd act as nurse

to all the babies in the court?' he gasped, in his intense surprise.

'No; in course not, sir,' said the old crone, showing her toothless gums in a grin. 'Only this un she takes specially to, 'cos why—it's her hown property.'

'Her own property!' echoed the puzzled nobleman.

'I should raythor think so. She bought it—gave seven pounds for it; and dear it was at the price! As poor and measly a looking brat as hever you set heyes on in a day's journey!'

'But how?—I don't understand. This is a Christian land, and people don't sell their children nowadays.'

'No—leastwise, not hoftens, 'cos there's nobody to buy 'em. But they does wuss —some on 'em,' went on the woman, with significant emphasis: '*they hinsures 'em!*'

Lord Cranbery drew a deep breath.

'God forgive them!' he muttered. 'I

fear there is too much justice in your implication.'

'That is 'ow it was with this un,' said the old woman, pointing upwards in the direction of the room from which the sounds of laughter and splashing continued. 'There were three on 'em haltogether. Father and mother both liked their drink. Lived two doors hoff. You can see the 'ouse—that un where the shirts is 'anging hout o' the winder yonder. Wanted to hinsure all three young uns. One on 'em wouldn't pass the hexamination, 'cos it was too weakly. *That un's alive still.* Eldest took measles and wasn't hattended to. Struck in, and it died. The hoffice shelled out the money, and the precious pair of 'em went on the booze for a fortnight. Never saw 'em sober all that time. Then Miss Tidd 'eard on it from Mr. Rivers, the curate of St. Barnaby, and she come down one day and looked hin. This un was hill then, a kind o' wastin' away. They was

feeding it on boiley, and sich-like messes. Miss Tidd she marches in where the two of 'em were a-looking at the empty gin-bottle, and a-wonderin' 'ow it were to get filled agin. She didn't mind 'em, bless you! but marches in as bold as a lion. "'Ow much is that child hinsured for?" she arsks, a-pointin' to the bed. They stared at her curious-like, and she stamped her little foot like hanythink. "Can't you hanswer me civil?" says she; and then the woman she ups and harsks what business is it of hern, and why does she hinterfere about folks's children at all. "I'll tell you why," she answers, as sharp as you like: "because if you choose, you need not wait long for the money—you need not wait for him to die. I'll buy him hoff of ye," she says, "and no more about it." Well, the end on it was she hands over the seven pounds it was hinsured for, and makes them both sign a paper doing away with any claim on it. Whether that 'ere paper 'll hold in law

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or not, how should hi know? but any ways, they'll not be wantin' to have the kid to keep. I've a took care on it ever since, and the young lady's paid me. But it's a rum start, and she is a queer one, and no mistake, botherin' over folks's dirty brats when she might be a-ridin' about in her carridge, and a-goin' to the hoperer.'

When Lord Cranbery was allowed to enter the room again, the child was dressed, and was sitting on Celia's knee. It was a pretty, fair little thing, with laughing blue eyes; but the pinched and drawn look of its features suggested that a period of semi-starvation had been undergone previous to its present comfortable mode of feeding. Miss Tidd was now engaged in supplying it with some sort of prepared food, which it ate ravenously, and like a wild animal.

'Tommy makes up for lost time, you see,' said Celia gaily, holding out her disengaged hand (the left one) to Lord Cranbery, who, if he had obeyed his first impulse, would

have knelt down upon the carpetless floor there and then, and kissed it as devoutly as though it appertained to a saint.

'I didn't know you ever came into Mulligan's Court,' she continued, 'or you should not have caught me like this.'

'Why not? Ah, Miss Tidd, you are precisely like your brother: you do good, and would rather no one knew of it.'

'It's very little, pitiably little, we can do. What's the use of making a fuss about it?' replied Miss Tidd rather impatiently. 'But how is it that you are here?'

Lord Cranbery explained, then begged to be allowed to accompany her home.

Celia hesitated.

'I am perfectly well able to take care of myself,' she said; 'perhaps you had better not wait. I know my way about here; the people all know me, and will not harm me.'

'But it would be such a pleasure,' pleaded Lord Cranbery pathetically. 'Dear Miss Tidd, do let me wait!'

'Well, well, as you like,' assented Miss Tidd at last. 'But you will have to sit down for a little time,' she added; 'I have another visit to pay before I leave.'

While Miss Tidd was out of the room, Lord Cranbery artfully led on the old woman to talk of her visitor. He wanted to hear over again the tale of Celia's goodness of heart. He would fain have taken the child in his arms—that baby whom Celia's divine pity had rescued from the jaws of the grave—but the little creature resisted. Perhaps Lord Cranbery was awkward, being all unused to babies; or perhaps it was that his grave face frightened the child. At any rate, Master Tommy kicked and struggled and yelled so lustily that the young nobleman was obliged to desist from the attempt.

But his admiration of Miss Tidd was so unmistakable that old Nancy could not fail to perceive it, and, with the cunning acquired during a long life of makeshifts, she humoured his fancy to its fullest extent, and ended by

worming a sovereign out of his by no means abundant store of coin thereby.

When Celia returned from her visit she was very silent, and prepared for departure without further delay.

As Lord Cranbery helped her on with her mantle he noticed, with a quick throb of sympathy, that her eyes were full of tears.

Little Tommy held out his arms to be caressed, and Celia took him up, kissed him with passionate vehemence, then fairly ran down the slippery stairs, leaving Lord Cranbery to follow as best he might.

Scarcely a word was exchanged until they reached Miss Tidd's hotel; then, with a bow, Lord Cranbery would have taken leave of her. But she put her hand on his arm.

'Come in,' she said impatiently. 'Mare will not be here until the evening, and if I stay alone I think I shall go crazy.'

CHAPTER XIX.

CELIA IS PERPLEXED AND WORRIED.

Lord Cranbery had been only too delighted to step into the hotel on Celia Tidd's invitation. The girl seemed troubled and unhappy, and his heart beat more rapidly in sympathy than perhaps it ought to have done, seeing what his relations to Lady Nora were.

Celia threw her outdoor garments upon a chair, and began to pace up and down the floor in restless excitability, but still without words.

Suddenly she stopped and looked her visitor in the face.

'What a horrible tragedy life is!' she exclaimed in a quick, eager, excited tone. 'If

one could only cease to realize it—only get away from all the misery and forget—forget! Mr. Luxmore tells me that I play at philanthropy. It is true. We all play at it, without in the least understanding the serious nature of the game. And the great sea of human misery rolls on and on, despite all our puny efforts to stem the tide. We float upon its surface, and are happy enough there until a time comes when we are forced below, and then—well, then it is terrible! We cannot forget the horrors disclosed—never! Oh, Lord Cranbery, do you not think that we need a Christ upon earth more now than they did two thousand years ago? Life was simpler then—less crowded, less complex. If He were amongst us now—a living, breathing Presence, instead of a beautiful abstract ideal—just think what He might accomplish! To give one's life for theirs! There are thousands ready to do that—thousands who are doing it every day! But of what use is it? Their powers

are finite—they are human. They despair, they sicken, they die—or perhaps they grow tired of it; and the problem of suffering humanity remains ever unsolved. It wants a God to solve it. Atlas held the world on his shoulders, they say. He must have had a sorry weight of misery to bear! That girl I went to see to-day! she is only sixteen, and she is dying—dying from injuries received from the hand of the man she—she lived with! He was drunk, of course — they always are — and she had hidden some money to buy food for her baby—it makes me sick, sick to think of it!—and the baby died of starvation, and now she is sinking fast, and he will have to be tried for his life for murder! But he will get off! She persists in stating that she stumbled, and received her injuries by falling against the sharp edge of the fender, though the doctor says it is impossible this could be the case. It is wonderful to me! Just think of it! She loves him still—that

brute who has killed her!—loves him more than ever, and says that she could die happy if he would only return and let her see him before she dies. And yet that girl has no faith, no religion—scarcely knows the meaning of the word—has barely heard the name of God! Mr. Rivers is a good man, but he cannot believe there is any hope for her. I can! Why, I wronged her when I said she had no religion. Is not such love as hers divine? Is it not religion enough?'

'Indeed, I think so,' said Lord Cranbery, in a low voice, half choking with emotion.

'Ah, yes, we want a Christ in modern life, were it but to take the children in His arms again, and to bless them. Those poor, helpless, murdered children! The men and women—well, they suffer from their own wrongdoing in many instances; but the babies—not murdered—merely allowed to die; the little children turned out of doors whilst their parents are prowling like wild beasts for food, their only playground the

streets, where they see vile sights and hear coarse language, and become familiarized with vice before they can speak plainly. It is well for those who die ; ah, yes, it is well for them ! They alone are to be envied. Would that I had the gift of poetry, to write another " Cry of the Children," another eloquent cry like that of your grand Elizabeth Barrett Browning.'

She stopped for a minute's pause, panting with excitement and indignation, and then went on :

' Yes, it is too true that we *play* at philanthropy, but I often wish I had been content with mere play. And yet I know but little of the deepest depths. My brother Marc says that no one but the coroner for a poor district can really form any adequate conception of the misery that exists. He says, also, that the systems of relief are all wrong together, though he confesses that as things are at present any radical change is impracticable. But that

they make slaves and hypocrites in place of men he has no doubt. We do not teach them to respect themselves—to understand what it is to be men and women. It is their landlords who pay the taxes, *they* simply pay the landlord, who is to them as a deity, supreme and unrelenting. Marc says that every man should have his individual stake in his country, and should be made to feel his responsibility.'

Miss Tidd subsided into a chair, and neither her visitor nor herself spoke for some time.

Lord Cranbery's kind heart ached at the suggestions of sorrowful stories she had thrown out. But what was there to say in answer to her ?

It was true, too true, all that she had alleged about suffering humanity. As she had said, the great sea of human misery rolled on and on indeed, and they could but stand and watch it, helpless and afraid. Far more conversant was she, who had merely been

here a few months, with the realities of life in London than he, who had, in a manner, studied them for half a lifetime.

Celia took up a fan from a table, and commenced fanning herself in a slow, listless manner.

'How stifling it is!' she remarked, with a glance at the windows, open to their fullest extent, but through which no air seemed to come. 'No air anywhere. It has all been breathed away, I think.'

'Town does get insufferable towards the end of the season, though it is strange you should feel that, after New York,' replied Lord Cranbery sympathetically.

'Ah, well, *we* can leave it when we choose, but how about those who are obliged to stay here and be baked? But we've had more than enough upon that subject,' exclaimed Miss Tidd impatiently. 'If you will be kind enough to ring the bell, Lord Cranbery, we will have some tea. It will probably make us hotter for the

time being, but one cannot dispense with it, all the same.'

Celia left the room when the tea was ordered, and presently returned, having changed her sombre walking-dress for a cool-looking tea-gown, all made of lace and of pale silk of a tint like unto the inside of a shell, in which she appeared as charming as a dream creation, Lord Cranbery thought. The flowing contours of the robe lent dignity to her slight figure, and its loose falling sleeves revealed the beauty of her white arms.

It was the first time these two people had been entirely alone at this period of the day, for Celia had become, in a certain sense, the fashion, and her society was much sought after.

As she performed the duties of hostess, and gave Lord Cranbery his cup of tea, it appeared to him that he was the most favoured of mortals. A delicious sensation of homely intimacy and happiness crept over his senses.

and he scarcely cared to speak, lest he should break the spell. When he reluctantly rose at last to make his adieux, Celia appeared surprised.

'I thought you would stay and dine with us,' she said in soft, pleading tones. 'Marc will be in presently, and we have no engagement until the time comes for Mrs. Mayberry's dance. Have you one? If not, do stay! You know we are leaving town next week?'

Leaving town! How simply she stated that crushing fact. Lord Cranbery turned ghastly white, and positively could find no word to reply to the courteous invitation she had given.

What had he been dreaming of? Of course they would be leaving town—everybody was leaving town, or talking of doing so. Nevertheless, so enwrapped in his own delicious thoughts had been this infatuated young nobleman that he had positively forgotten the exigencies of the fashionable

world at this season. It had appeared to him that this pleasant fooling might go on for ever. It had annihilated time.

But, alas ! the delicious spell was broken. They were leaving town ! No longer would he see her every day. The shock did more than merely awaken him. It revealed him to himself.

'Leaving town next week,' he said with imbecile reiteration ; 'but that is surely a very sudden resolution ?'

Miss Tidd gave him a glance of surprise.

'Not at all,' she replied ; 'you certainly must have heard us talk of our plans ? We mean to travel. Marc wants me to see your country thoroughly, now that I am here. You know, as yet, England simply means London to me.'

'I—I am very absent-minded sometimes,' was the hesitating comment.

Celia could not avoid noticing his agitation. Probably to her rather unusual atti-

tude of mind was to be attributed the fact that she felt some strange compunction for her own share in his sorrow. She might, indeed, be a thorough-paced coquette. It had certainly been often laid to her charge. But then the men of the world with whom she had hitherto coquetted were perfectly able to take care of themselves. If they got hurt in the amatory combat, they took great pains to hide the fact. There was a certain simplicity about this, her latest, victim which caused Celia Tidd to feel guilty and unhappy.

'You have not said whether you will stay or go?' she asked at length, to break through an oppressive silence.

'I should like to stay,' answered Lord Cranbery humbly, and she looked pleased.

It was rather a heavy half-hour that passed before the American put in his appearance. Lord Cranbery was too simple to be able to conceal the pangs that the impending separation caused him, and the

light society gossip Celia tried to entertain him with fell very flat.

By-and-by he descried Celia's mandoline, which was on a chair near him.

'Can you sing me something?' he pleaded; then with naïve self-revelation: 'The first time I—I saw you—you were singing, and I could not forget your voice or your face.'

Celia took up the mandoline, and struck a few vagrant chords. Then she laid it down again.

'No—do not ask me! I cannot sing to-night. I should feel like Nero, I think, fiddling while Rome was burning. Ah, here is Marc!' She broke off suddenly, springing up and running to the door. 'I can tell his footsteps among a hundred. Well, dear boy, are you tired to death in this dreadful heat? Lord Cranbery, who is taking compassion on my loneliness, laughs at me for talking about the heat here after New York, but I tell him

we don't stay in the city—we go to the shore or the springs or somewhere.'

Mr. Tidd shook hands, and welcomed his sister's guest, and Lord Cranbery felt obliged in some degree to rouse himself and endeavour to be agreeable.

When he had taken his departure, and Marc Aurelius was sitting by the window, smoking a cigarette, a gossamer-clad creature stole in and put a pair of soft arms around his neck.

'Oh, Marc dear, I feel so tired and so sad! I wish to goodness I hadn't promised to go with Mrs. Bloffit to that ridiculous dance. I'd rather stay with you, old man.'

'What's up, little girl?' asked Mr. Tidd slowly. 'Been breaking your heart over those poor folks in Mulligan's Court again? Told you it would never do. Guess you'd better have taken my advice and left philanthropy alone. How smart you are to-night, my dear!'

'Isn't it a pretty dress, Marc?' said

Celia, standing off a little that he might observe the full effect of the toilette.

'Yes, and not a bad-looking girl inside of it.'

'But, oh! it has cost such a lot of money,' went on Celia, with compunction, 'and I can't help wondering if one has any right to spend so much upon one's self.'

'Luxury creates demands which employ labour, and not cheap labour, either, and so in the end it does good. It is not your costly dress that encourages the sweating system, Celia—it is cheap clothing that does the mischief there. Besides, my dear little girl, if you begin puzzling your poor brains over social problems you'll end either on the lecture platform or in a lunatic asylum—and I guess I don't care about either catastrophe.'

'But *somebody* must think, Marc.'

'Don't let it be you, Celia. You are not made for it. Your head is a tolerably

pretty one, but it won't stand that sort of work. I don't go so far as to say don't *do* kind things, mind, but only don't think too much about what you can't mend. Give me a kiss, and go away.'

Celia obeyed the first injunction, but not the second.

'And—and—there's that poor stupid fellow,' she went on, in a shamefaced sort of manner; 'he's gone and got unhappy—and—and if I'm ever so kind to him it will only make matters worse. Why *are* people so frightfully weak-minded and—and susceptible?' she ended impatiently.

Marc Aurelius took the cigarette from his mouth, and regarded her calmly, and with a trifle of inquiry in his looks.

'Say now! It's *his* heart, not yours, that's been breaking? Guess you'd better have taken my advice that time, and let *him* alone. But I did not think *you* were likely to be affected—much. 'Pears to me, Celia, my dear, you are unusually tender

over this particular flirtation. Didn't give you credit for so much sensibility.'

The arms were suddenly withdrawn, and a quick sigh followed.

Then Miss Tidd ran to the door and waved her fan of white feathers as an adieu.

'Good-night, Marc. Here is Mrs. Bloffit's carriage, and I shall have to go. Don't wait up for me, and don't bother about me. I dare say it'll all come right in the end. Any way, I'm going to dance myself into a better frame of mind to-night.'

CHAPTER XX.

TWO LOVE-LORN SWAINS.

Amongst the giant creations of his small hands the little artist, Zachary Luxmore, sat drooping and despondent. The huge canvases formed a strange contrast, with the spirited and lifelike figures in their heroic attitudes, to the small, weary-looking man, their creator, who had thrown aside palette and brush, and to whom a pipe appeared to afford no consolation, since he had filled one and forgotten to light it. Lord Cranbery himself, not in the best of spirits, felt sorry for Luxmore in this despondent mood, and asked if he were out of health. Nothing but liver could account

for such persistent melancholy, the young nobleman affirmed, although something else was certainly to blame for his own sadness.

Cranbery had come there in an aimless, drifting sort of way. There was some connection between the place and the beautiful Celia, now lost to him for ever. Had it not been for the chance meeting with her brother here, he might never have known her, never have experienced the pangs of suppressed and unattainable love.

And Luxmore knew her, had known her before him, had known her from a previous meeting in Paris. Luxmore was a sort of connecting link—if a slight one—between himself and Miss Tidd. Besides, the artist had painted her portrait. She herself had told him so much, and he had nothing—not even a photograph—to remind him of the one sentimental episode in his hitherto prosaic life.

Surely the artist must yet possess some sketch, some slight outline or charcoal

drawing, of her graceful head? If so, he would at once commission him to paint a portrait from it. There could be no harm in that, surely? Nobody need know that he possessed it, and he could place it in some hidden nook where he might worship it in solitude, as he might the effigy of some adored and reverenced saint.

Life now stretched before him like a hard and dusty road, with no flowers of romance or poesy to beautify it. All his wonted amusements and employments had ceased to charm or interest him. What good was it now to endeavour to develop a mind in which Celia had no further interest, or to plan philanthropic schemes wherein she would not participate?

It must be acknowledged that Cranbery was extremely hard hit, when all his philosophy and moral training failed to support him, or to teach resignation.

Timidly, and with considerable hesitation, he broached the object of his visit.

He had been—well—from the first—considerably struck with the—the—in fact, the intellectual refinement and grace of Miss Tidd's expressive countenance, and hoped Mr. Luxmore would be able to do it justice in a picture. He would take it as a particular favour and——

He hesitated so much that he defeated his purpose of seeming indifferent.

The little artist, leaning his head on his hand, was watching him intently, and at the finish laughed a bitter and rather woeful laugh.

'Another!' he exclaimed enigmatically, and then relapsed into silence.

Lord Cranbery looked conscious and uncomfortable.

'What do you mean by that strange expression?' he asked, after an awkward pause.

'I mean exactly what I say, Lord Cranbery,' returned the artist, starting to his feet and beginning to pace up and down

the long studio; appearing an extremely ludicrous figure, and yet with a certain dignity about him, nevertheless; for the man was in earnest, terribly in earnest: and earnestness, however misplaced, cannot fail to be impressive.

'I mean that you would not take my warning, and that you are another victim to the coquetries of Celia Tidd. There! is that language you can understand?'

The artist again laughed bitterly.

'I saw it all from the beginning! Philanthropy and sentimentalism merely followed art and platonics, and, I have no manner of doubt, with the same disastrous result.'

He paced up and down two or three times. But he was too much moved to keep silence long.

'I know that I'm a fool to show my hand in this way, but I don't care! I'm past all that! I'm in love with her—in love with Celia Tidd, you know. If it cares, all the world may know of it. At first it was

merely for her money that I courted her society — there ! You see I'm honest, at least. But that has all changed. Not now —not now ! There is no question of money now. I've fairly lost my head over her, and I don't care if she had not a penny. There's nothing in life worth having if she is not to belong to me. If any man looks at her admiringly—and who could fail to do so ?— I should like to kill him for his presumption.

'And do you think I have arrived at this imbecile state of mind without some care and pains on her part ?' he continued. 'I, Zachary Luxmore, who prided myself on having gone through all that sort of business long ago, and having come out of it scathless ! I, who graduated in flirtation in Parisian salons, and—and —never mind where else ! I was to paint her portrait. Oh yes, and the sweet sympathetic intercourse we had then, and her wishes to know all that I could teach her about art — her divine

ignorance—bah! What a farce it has all been!'

He paced the studio rapidly, and continued speaking.

'Well, I am not blind. I have seen it all from the beginning. You remember that I warned you, and that you would not take my warning. Just think of what I have gone through during the last few months. The torture I have endured passes the power of words, and yet I never spoke.'

'What could you have said?' asked Lord Cranbery at length, roused to make some sort of pretence of keeping his secret. 'I tell you that you are quite mistaken as to the relations existing between that lady and myself. As for your own friendship, I cannot presume to express an opinion, save that you have probably misinterpreted her great natural sweetness and graciousness of manner for something much more vulgar and commonplace; but I must request you to believe *me* when I state that there is nothing of the

nature of flirtation between us. You forget that I—I am engaged to my cousin, Lady Nora——'

There was a nervous haste in the manner of this assertion that suggested inward doubt on the part of the defender, and Luxmore paid small attention to it.

'And yet you come asking for some sketch of Celia Tidd,' he remarked dryly. Then, with sudden determination, he shook his head over the request.

'No, Lord Cranbery, I utterly decline your commission at any price. I am not going to feed a flame which in the end may consume me. You forget that Miss Tidd is anxious to wed into the nobility, and consequently you, as an engaged man, and I as a plebeian one, can have no further interest in her choice.'

Lord Cranbery stood astounded at this plainness of speech. Then he became conscious that he was more angry than he had ever been before. Confound the fellow!

what did he mean by this manner of talk? His words tumbled over each other in such a way as to result in a slow stammer only.

'You are impertinent to me,' he said; 'and to Miss Tidd you are, I am sure, most libellous and unjust. If you will not make the sketch it is enough to say so. What justification can you have for speaking of my private affairs? What——'

'Look here, my lord,' said Luxmore, interrupting him as he paused for a word, 'I didn't suppose that you would like what I said. I didn't mean that you should. You mustn't expect me to mince my words with you. You are a man of rank. That is a thing to consider, no doubt—at some other time. I take leave to think that genius levels all such distinctions, but that is a belief on which I do not act always. I have reasons of business for not doing so. I choose to act on it now with you.'

'And for what particular reason,' asked

Lord Cranbery, still stammering and indignant, 'are you impertinent to me?'

'I am not impertinent, my lord; I am simply plain-spoken.'

'And why—why—why?'

'Because you, whose lines have always fallen in pleasant places, are not content with your own good fortune, but must stand in the way of mine. I might have married Celia Tidd if you had not been a peer. Because — but perhaps you find these reasons enough to satisfy you?'

'These are matters that I cannot argue with you,' Lord Cranbery said, feeling somehow quite helpless, and not knowing how to act or what to say.

Should he knock the little artist down? There would be no great credit in that. There might be a scene and an exposure, too.

'You have exposed your character in a very singular light,' he said at length, drawing himself up and advancing towards

the door of the studio. 'The state of feeling which you have revealed might to some extent excuse that; but to a moderate extent only. I am afraid that I must put down the rest to a coarse nature. I wish you good-day and good-bye.'

He could not have stung Luxmore much more deeply with anything that it would have been possible to say. The little artist made a threatening start forward, but thought better of whatever intention he might have had.

Then, Lord Cranbery being gone, and his feelings being out of all proportion to his frame, he threw himself upon the rugs of his studio, rolled about silently, and cruelly tore his fingers through his long hair.

CHAPTER XXI.

CELIA TIDD IN AN IGNOMINIOUS POSITION.

Had Lord Cranbery known the amount of mischief done by the little artist but a day or two previously he would have been considerably more severe in dealing with him at the studio.

In place of humbly begging and entreating Luxmore for a sketch of Celia, he would, in all probability, have taken up quite a different position.

He would have asked instead by what right the other had taken upon himself to insult her ; for it was little short of an insult to repeat offensively an incident of mere foolish pleasantry as though it were something of significance and of solemn import.

Of such a breach of good taste had Luxmore been guilty.

Like the fabled dog in the manger, he would fain have kept off all who would eat of the provender which was not consumable by him. There was but one excuse to be alleged for this attitude of his. This was that to such a degree was he dominated by the passion of jealousy that it made him, for the time being, to all intents and purposes, insane.

Just at the time when Celia Tidd was busily engaged with her preparations for leaving town, Luxmore, who had got wind of the intended departure, called to say farewell.

He fancied that he had been very good and patient in his dealings with the woman whom he accused, in his own mind, of leading him on. Surely she would show some return of the old interest, the old sentiment, now that they were about to part? The sweet platonic relationship against which he had

inveighed so loudly was not entirely without charm because he had ceased to believe in it. Its charm had, indeed, grown with its departure, like most things in life.

But Celia's mind was occupied with other matters, and she chose therefore to ignore the past as utterly as though it had never existed. She was a trifle pressed for time, and was worried and anxious besides; so perhaps her manner that day was not marked by the extreme affability and gracious kindness usual to her.

At any rate, the little artist took umbrage at it, and grew distinctly bitter and spiteful in consequence. His disappointment was keen, and took the form of ill-temper.

Celia, on her part, was in no mood to humour him. She was apt to forget that she had made an effort to win regard and affection, when that same regard and affection became troublesome. She could not help men falling in love with her, but she could regard their stupid *minauderies* with

indifference. Her flirtations, therefore, were liable to get mixed up in the most ridiculous manner, Tom taking Harry's place in her remembrance, and Harry giving way to Dick, in a way not complimentary to these separate adorers.

'But, you know, they are all alike when you reckon them up,' she said once to Marc, when he ventured to expostulate with her upon this trick of hers, and some scrape into which it had brought her. 'They all say exactly the same things, and they all mean exactly the same proportion of what they do say! How is one to remember them as individuals, and not simply as a species?'

And then she went on to make him laugh by describing her own perplexed state of mind during a concert one night. How she felt sentimentally inclined while listening to a wild and despairing love ditty, and how she tried to fix upon a lover to identify with the hero of the song, and how her efforts were futile, simply because she could not

remember one without another following so close at heel that no concentration was possible. A lost opportunity. The song ended, and the mood passed, and the little bit of sentiment remained unindulged.

It is, however, quite certain that all this would not have satisfied Zachary Luxmore, who had cultivated the ego to such a tremendous degree that it obscured his view of the rest of humanity, and who was apt to forget that the vision of others was not affected in like manner. Besides, he had in reality given some amount of gold in exchange for alloy, and Celia was to blame in that she failed to detect the ring of the genuine metal amongst all the false coinage passing current in her world.

She was, indeed, too cynical, and disbelieved in everyone who professed too much.

Mr. Zachary Luxmore was in many ways so full of affectation that she found it difficult to credit him with sincerity in any temper of his mind. Besides, she was tired of him.

He bored her now ; and that, in Celia's eyes, was an unpardonable sin.

Perhaps she showed this too plainly ; for, as before said, he waxed bitter and scornful.

He desired to know whether English society had equalled her expectations, or whether, like himself, she had found it a hollow mockery.

'It seems pleasant enough ; but, then, most shams seem more pleasant than realities,' said Celia. Then, with a touch of sharpness in her tone, 'But it is possible that neither you nor I are in a fair position to judge ! We, who are only received there on sufferance !'

'On sufferance ? What do you mean, Miss Tidd ?' inquired Luxmore, colouring slightly, for this hint touched upon a sensitive nerve.

'Why, merely this : Neither money nor brains serve to win more than toleration in that strange, select, narrow circle you call society. One needs to be born in the purple,

as it were, to understand it so completely as to be a correct judge of its merits and deficiencies.'

'I deny that most emphatically,' retorted the artist with considerable heat. 'An outsider is much more likely to give an unbiased opinion on the point.'

He was an arrant snob at heart, and posed badly when he aimed at indifference to rank.

Miss Tidd thought the question unworthy of argument, and merely shrugged her graceful shoulders. But Luxmore's opportunity had arrived.

'Well, Miss Tidd, I suppose it is probable that you, at least, may soon have closer relations with that same select portion of humanity. For it is extremely unlikely that so charming a person, and—and one so gifted by fortune, could fail eventually to attain the goal she aims at, the summit of her ambition, or what I was given to understand to be such!'

Celia opened wide her beautiful eyes, and regarded him with astonishment.

There was a suggestion of malice in the look that met her own.

What did the detestable little man mean by his queer hints and innuendoes? Some impertinence lay hidden beneath that enigmatical utterance.

'My ambition? I am scarce conscious of possessing anything so pretentious as an ambition! I want nothing more than to have a good time myself, and to see other folks have one,' mused Celia, in slow and deliberate fashion; 'but I am rather curious, nevertheless, to learn what Mr. Luxmore chooses to imagine my ambition to be.'

The tone of cold and lofty disdain in which the fair American spoke stung Luxmore to the quick, and caused his temper to get the better of his judgment.

'Oh, please don't credit my imagination with any such flights, Miss Tidd! It isn't sufficiently vivid to rise so far, if even its owner

ventured to presume to fathom your desires. Your brother was my informant. Ask him what he confided to Lord Cranbery and myself about your ambition a long time ago, in my studio.'

Celia's colour came and went as she tried to understand.

'Lord Cranbery? Marc told Lord Cranbery—what?' she repeated, naïvely ignoring Luxmore's own name, a significant fact that the artist did not fail to note. When Lord Cranbery was there he was nobody, then.

Miss Tidd turned quickly, with her head held very high in the air, and looked Luxmore straight in the face.

'Mr. Luxmore,' she said, in a haughty and peremptory manner, 'you must really explain yourself! I am entirely unused to having my thoughts made public property, and commented upon and discussed without my sanction. Frankly, I do not like it. It was probably some flighty speech of my brother's—he is always jesting—and *you*

have put your own meaning upon it! But, then, if it is capable of any construction that is wrong or—or unfeminine, I should have expected a *friend* to refute it, or, at least, to give me a chance of so doing myself!'

Bitterly now did the artist repent of his indiscretion. Much would he have given could he have been allowed to retreat in silence.

He murmured something about its being without question a joke, and hoped that Miss Tidd did not believe it possible for him to doubt her good taste, or——

But Miss Tidd cut short his protestations. She was very angry.

'Mr. Luxmore, I have heard too many of your scathing comments upon members of my sex to expect that I can escape from them in turn! You are extremely clever at fathoming the unworthy motives which prompt actions of seeming goodness, and the evil meanings that underlie the sincerest of speeches!'

Luxmore started to his feet.

'Stop, Miss Tidd—Celia! For God's sake do not speak to me in such a manner!' he cried, the tears of outraged passion and vanity starting to his eyes. 'You know—you *must* know that in my eyes you are different to all other women! You are cruel—wilfully, shamelessly cruel, Celia Tidd! You played with me so long as it amused you, and then when you were tired of the pastime you threw me aside like a toy that is worthless and broken! And I bore it—bore it without reproaching you, content if now and then you threw me a look or a smile, even as you might throw a bone to a dog——'

Here the artist choked, and hid his face in his hands. Every feature of it was convulsed with passion, and it was well that he should hide it. But Celia had read his story there, and could no longer doubt the genuine nature of his emotion.

She was for once profoundly astonished.

He was not so wholly insincere as she had held him to be. She felt exceedingly uncomfortable. The situation was an awkward one. How was she to tide it over ?

But Celia Tidd was emphatically and before all things a woman of the world. It did not take her a minute to decide that the best policy on her part was to ignore, so far as possible, the real significance of Luxmore's agitation, and to treat it as of mere commonplace origin.

With consummate tact, therefore, she begged forgiveness for having doubted the sincerity of his friendship, and then by skilful management she gradually led the conversation round to general topics.

It was some time before the little artist recovered sufficient self-control to follow her lead, but he felt grateful to her in that she relieved them both from embarrassment.

Luxmore's outburst had been forced from him by the stinging pain engendered by her contempt, but he knew that the time was

unpropitious, and did not wish to pursue the subject.

On one point, at least, he had a humble estimate of his own powers. Celia was not for him, and he recognised this fact, and had from the first very little hope. He could not help singeing his wings at the flame, but the light would never be his own.

Celia felt the position to be too tantalizing. She was dying to know the nature of the jest made by Marc about her ambition. She had by this time completely forgotten her own foolish speech, spoken in an idle and aimless moment, and fading from her memory as soon as uttered.

But she decided not to press the question. Instinct told her that it would be unwise ; and the artist, who had struggled into some sort of composure, very speedily took his departure. She had really wounded him. In supreme dejection he crept away to meditate in solitude upon his own mad infatuation for a woman who despised him.

Meanwhile Celia was wild with impatient longing until her brother returned, when he was cornered immediately, and the truth demanded from him.

It was some little time before he could bring the matter back to his mind, and even then he could not be made to appreciate the heinous nature of his crime.

'Only told them that I had come to England with the stern determination to capture one of the aristocracy for a husband. Only—— Oh, Marc, how could you? Do you not see what a frightful position it places me in? I'm sure I never, never could have said it!'

'Why, certainly you did, Celia! But what need is there of such a fuss? It is but a trifle—a jest. They knew better than to believe me—neither of them is a fool, any way! What on earth is there to worry over?'

'Everything. Just think of the ignominy —the sordid position in which it places

me with—with him!' exclaimed the angry beauty, pacing the floor restlessly. 'What can he have thought of me? From the first I must have appeared nothing but a vulgar *intrigante*, who was trying to entangle him in a flirtation because he had a handle to his name! And nothing could be more false than such an estimate of me, for—I—I *did* like him for himself!' This with a sudden catch in the voice. 'And now—now I can never look him in the face again! I feel just as though it were written all over me: "This article to be exchanged for a title!" Good heavens! No wonder that American girls are looked upon as fast and unwomanly!'

Marc Aurelius was troubled and dismayed. He caught the girl as she passed him, and drew her down upon his knee.

'Poor little sensitive, outraged Celia!' he said penitently. 'What would you have me do to atone for my foolish jest? Must I send a challenge to Luxmore? Indeed, I

feel inclined to wring that little reptile's neck for him! What right had he to come here and make you unhappy by repeating such rubbish?'

It would have been bad for Zachary Luxmore had he confronted his American friend at that moment, for there was an unwonted fire in the brown eyes, usually so sleepy.

'Much use that would be!' replied his sister, trying to smile. 'Bad is only made worse by talking of it! I shall tell him it was a capital joke, and laugh at his solemn manner. Oh, Marc, it doesn't signify for *him*, but it's—it's the other——'

'Lord Cranbery? Can't I put that right, anyhow? I am sure if I explain how unfounded and unwarranted my assertion was——'

Celia, with a little shriek, placed her pretty hand on his lips.

'Not for worlds!' she exclaimed. 'I would not have you mention such a thing to

him for more than I can say! My only hope now is that we may never, never meet again!'

After she left the room Marc Aurelius sat puffing his cigar moodily. He was thinking matters over, and his cogitations did not appear to be very pleasant, if one might judge from his impatient gestures and occasional expletives.

'Well, of all the darned mazes a fellow ever had to find his way out of, I reckon this beats creation!' he muttered at last. 'Who'd have guessed it? Poor little Celia! Think I'd better take her to Japan. She once said she'd like to go there. Perhaps things will settle themselves before we return. Hope he'll get married, or—or hang himself, for what I care, so long as Celia forgets it all! Any way, Japan's a long way off, and she's best out of this confounded country. Wish we'd never come here!'

CHAPTER XXII.

MARC AURELIUS DISCHARGES A DUTY.

But before Mr. Tidd left England he had a task to fulfil, one which weighed somewhat heavily upon his mind. He had tried to decide upon the right course to pursue in a certain dilemma he found himself placed in, and it was very difficult. He was a student of humanity, and humanity is apt to be a queer, complex, and in some respects disappointing study at times. The question now troubling the American was this—Could he rely upon the truth and honour of a British nobleman when the said truth and honour would require to be exercised in opposition to his own interests? As Marc

Aurelius was wont to say, he 'set no store on the aristocracy;' but it is probable that, deep down in his heart, he believed more in the hereditary instincts and inherent nobility of gentle blood than he allowed himself to confess.

At any rate, he decided that the Marquis of Carabas was the proper person to whom to deliver certain papers that had fallen into his hands in a peculiar manner.

He wrote to the Marquis, asking for an interview about particular and private business; which that gentleman—little dreaming of the important issues that hung upon this meeting — answered by a cordial invitation to the American to dine at his club, the Palladion. The Marquis cherished a very lively sense of gratitude towards Mr. Tidd, who had unconsciously done him so good a turn, and had felt sorry that there appeared so slight a chance of showing it. He could not understand why Mr. Tidd

should so carefully refrain from asking any of the little favours which it was in his power to bestow, such as orders for the House, or social privileges.

But the American had always appeared to withdraw himself from any suggestion of intimacy, although, on the few occasions when they had met, the Marquis found him affable and agreeable enough.

The Marquis, who had been in the States, set all this down as a declaration of independence, and as the aggressive self-assertion of a democrat who did not choose to associate with or owe anything to one whose rank was in this country above his own. But in this particular he did an injustice to the simple nature of Mr. Tidd, who, while quite of the opinion that all men are equal under heaven, would never have acknowledged any need of flaunting this doctrine offensively before any man.

Nevertheless, Mr. Tidd did not accept the invitation of the Marquis, but fixed an

hour at which he would wait upon the latter in his own house instead. The Marquis was writing letters in his library when Mr. Tidd's card was brought to him, and he directed that the gentleman should be shown in to him there at once.

The library was a fine, spacious room, with a range of low bookshelves in black oak all around it, and a space above where busts of bygone statesmen alternated with specimens of rare old dragon china, the rich tints of which gave warmth and colour to the walls. There was an admirable collection of books on those well-lined shelves, although the present owner of those treasures seldom took down a volume, confining his attentions to those pamphlets and Government blue-books with which the table was littered.

'I am very pleased to see you at last beneath my roof, Mr. Tidd,' said the Marquis genially. 'I began to fear that you had conceived some prejudice against me

personally, because you allowed me no chance of winning your friendship.'

Mr. Tidd bowed gravely.

'I am not a society man, my lord. If you ask my character of Celia—that is, my sister—she will tell you that I'm a regular bear. But I happen to have a very particular errand to you, and that must stand for the reason of my present visit.'

'Oh, indeed! Well, at least I am glad that it has been sufficiently powerful to induce you to waive your dislike to us so far as to bring you here.'

'You are very civil. I am extremely obliged. But it is simple enough. I have merely to discharge a duty that was laid upon me through a dead man. At least, I don't know whether I ought to call it a duty. But you will know all about that when you look at the papers.'

Having despatched his business, the American did not linger long; and the Marquis, finding him decidedly unapproachable,

was rather relieved than otherwise when he departed.

The Marquis stood there in the twilight after he had gone, with the sealed packet in his hand, undecided whether to open it or no.

Some queer, inexplicable feeling of dread was growing within him, a presentiment of coming evil, combined with a wish to put off indefinitely some eventful moment, some terrible crisis in his existence.

He knew, without asking, from whom the American had received the papers.

What could these relics of a dead man bring to him personally? Already everything necessary to his succession and his comfort had emanated from that source. Anything more could only mean mischief, trouble, confusion.

The Marquis glanced irresolutely back into the room, as he stood by the window. Although it was still late summer, the evenings were growing chilly, and a brisk little fire burnt in the big grate. Would it not

be well just to drop the sealed packet unopened into the midst of that bright blaze, and so set at rest any troublesome questions to which it might give rise?

He made one or two steps in the direction of the fire, then stopped, with a laugh.

'What an ass I am!' he exclaimed, half aloud; 'as if that wouldn't make the thing ten times worse, ten times more unpleasant and unforgettable! Why, I should be always thinking about them, always imagining that there was some evil coming, which they might have taught me to stave off. They would be like the six burnt books of the Cumean Sibyl, that must have arisen many a time and oft to vex the soul of Tarquin with their irrevocably unsolved mystery. No, no, let me solve the mystery first, and, if necessary, burn them afterwards. After all, I got them for nothing, so that in that particular I have the pull over Tarquinius Superbus.'

So the Marquis broke the seals and read

the papers; and the disclosure contained therein was quite as marvellous as any that his imagination could have conjured up, and disastrous, apparently, if we might judge from the effect that it produced.

His face grew livid, and great beads of sweat stood on his brow. Once again he glanced across at the fire. Had he but obeyed his first impulse, and burnt them unread! Who was it said that we could never fail if we trusted our impulses? What a fool he had been to resist it! Then it would have been a crime, perhaps, but an ignorant one—but *now* it would be *felony!*

He buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud. Was ever man placed in such a cruel situation before?

It meant so much to him. Not only the loss of everything that made life rich, powerful, luxurious; but also the loss of the woman whom he loved. If those papers were to be given out to the world he would need to say farewell to his hopes of marry-

ing Lady Ermyntrude — at least, for an indefinite period. There was no doubt whatever that neither would she contemplate the possibility of such a union, nor would her parents (at least, her feminine parent) allow her so to do. And he was very much in love with his beautiful betrothed.

God in heaven! why could not the disclosure have occurred later — since it must occur at all? why could it not have come when he had made his own the woman whose beauty he coveted more than all the wealth and position the world contained?

It would have been bad enough then. But now? To give her up now—at the very moment of attainment? It was more than ought to be asked of any man in whose veins ran warm, human, passionate blood. It could only be expected of abstract and inhuman virtue.

It had taken months of passionate love-making to awaken the exquisite marble woman to anything approaching life. He

had the artist pride of imagination, added to the more common human sentiment. Was he not to reap the good of his toil? Was he to be content to stand aside, and see the Galatea to which he had given life—as it were—awakened to another love? He remembered so vividly all the charms of the wonderful creature he thought to make his wife, and they maddened him with longing. The pure, transparent skin, the clear eyes, the gold of her hair, the queenly grace of her figure, the touch of her lips in her rare, and therefore doubly valued, moments of demonstration.

He could not give her up. More than this, he must marry her soon, or the fear of losing her would drive him mad. He paced the room in an agony of fear, longing, misery, despair.

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more.'

Who was it said that? He was a fool, whoever he was, or he could not have talked

in that cold-blooded manner about the relative value of love and honour. The love he must have known had no element of passion in it, or the scale would have gone down heavily weighted on the other side from honour.

Well, at least, he, the Marquis, was differently made. Honour, duty, truth, unselfishness, were beautiful abstractions, but the real, heavy, tangible facts of life were love and passion.

After all, who knew of the contents of the packet? It was sealed, as it must have left the hands of the dead man. The American had just that sort of scrupulous mind that would decline to pry into a secret that had been entrusted to his care. No one else in the whole world could have any conjecture about it. If it were a crime—at least it would be a safe one.

In every relation of life the Marquis of Carabas had hitherto been absolutely the soul of honour. Had any of his acquaint-

ances been asked for an opinion of his character, they would have declared him to be immaculate.

But there is this to be said about him: he had never yet had any temptation too strong to be easily resisted. His interests and his duty had run hitherto on the same lines. It is so easy to be good when there is no inducement to be wicked.

The soul of honour!

Yet, when the footman came into the library to attend to the fire after the Marquis left the room, that pampered menial looked with an air of disgust at some blackened flakes that flew from the fireplace as the wind from the opening door reached them.

'Bother the thing! What on earth's the use of havin' a waste-paper basket if the Marquis will keep on burnin' of his papers hisself?'

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GROWTH OF A CAUSE.

A MERE slight, even though it involves an act of ingratitude, does not long rankle in a young and healthy mind. After that second visit to the Park, Bertie Shelburne resolved to think no more of Lady Nora Challoner, or the Marquis of Carabas, or the incidents which had seemed to shake him, all of a sudden, out of his calm boyhood, and to make him almost a man. Yet it is not so easy as the customary phrase would make it appear to 'whistle one's feelings down the wind.' Bertie, now able to return to work, felt the need of some other occupation—something incessant, exciting, practi-

cal. The weak endeavour to stifle their thoughts; the strong, to raise their thoughts above themselves.

Opportunities of mental activity offered themselves to Bertie Shelburne immediately on his return to the workshop. A period of great unrest and of vague aims among the working classes seemed about to culminate in some determined action. Certain lean years, during which there had been great public suffering, had been followed by one or two years of unusual prosperity. But the agitations which the lean years had engendered prolonged themselves into this time of full work and good wages. Perhaps Jacob Dean was to a large extent responsible for the keeping alive of the spirit of discontent.

That there should be a short season of prosperity, and then a long season of collapse and depression, he had convinced himself, was inevitable under the existing system of 'exploiting the workman.' There

would be a recurrence of one condition of affairs, and then of the other, so long as the world lasted, unless that system could be changed. And changed it should be, he affirmed, whilst work was still tolerably plentiful, and the working man had means in his pockets; for how was it likely that men would combine to struggle against society for their rights when the immediately pressing matter was the struggle against each other for bread?

Jacob was a Socialist, and even a revolutionary Socialist, but the more his experience extended, the more clearly he perceived that the realization of the Socialist ideal was yet afar off. Nevertheless, the doctrines, he persuaded himself, were making headway, as, indeed, they were. Perhaps if his enthusiasm had been accompanied by an investigating spirit he would have found that the spread of his views was rather a consequence of human greed than of human enlightenment. There were

few members of the working class who understood Socialism, for it is a foreign ideal, opposed to the spirit and to the prepossessions of the British race; but the idea that one class has too much and that another class has too little is common to all races, for it is everywhere practically exemplified. On the prepared ground of this old and settled conviction, therefore, the doctrines of the Socialists took root. The power of reasoning on social conditions was no more common than before, but discontent was almost universal.

To focus discontent is the object of all reformers of the class to which Jacob Dean belonged.

'To make 'em hate the conditions under which they live,' he had said many a time to Bertie; 'to make 'em wild with themselves and with society, because they are no better off, is the first duty that men of my stamp have to perform. It is so hard to move 'em because they have come to think

that what they suffer is inevitable. The spirit of serfdom, I tell you, is as common now as it was under King Stephen. It has got into the blood, and it sticks there ; it has been driven into the brain by centuries of evil teaching and worse experience, and to move it is like blasting rocks. Show me a man that is discontented, out of sorts with his whole surroundings, and I will show you one that is capable of assisting to create a new era. Discontent, my lad, is divine.'

And so, from Jacob's point of view, there was good reason for rejoicing. Unquestionably there was, even in these good times, a feeling of general dissatisfaction. Nobody felt that he was getting just what he ought to have. Whilst the depression had lasted—and it had been long and most cruelly severe—there had been agitations of all sorts ; for those who have panaceas it is almost impossible to number, and they were all active at once. There were demonstra-

tions of the unemployed ; and as these contained disorderly elements it was but natural that many of the quieter demonstrationists should get knocked on the head by the police. There were demonstrations of the Friends of Social Revolution, with some more knocking on the head as a concomitant. There were demonstrations of the Tenpenny Loaf League, whose object was to convince the working man that he could never be happy until almost every article that he consumed was subject to taxation.

And with the return of prosperity there were strikes. Society raged and stormed through all its newspapers and on all its platforms, and labour became more dogged and sullen, the general tenor of the argument employed by society being to convince labour that it was a class outside the social pale, hostile to law and order, and requiring constant and powerful restraint. An evil lesson this, a mere sowing of the whirlwind, it might be thought.

Jacob Dean saw great possibilities in the tension which this opposition of classes had produced. He threw all his energy into the demand for an eight hours day. It was a practical, and might be an almost immediate, reform. An eight hours day would moderate the stress of competition, he declared ; it would make life more tolerable, by providing additional leisure ; it would provide work for more hands, and even in times of prosperity there were thousands of unemployed ; above all, it would tend to a reduction of the inequalities of social condition, by making a more equal division of the profits of labour.

Jacob easily enlisted Bertie in his crusade. It was the very moment to catch the young man at his best, when he was suffering from the sting of a disappointment ; and so Bertie found the excitement he desired in the prosecution of a propaganda among the working class.

'It's fast coming to a head,' Jacob re-

marked before long. 'This combination of employers is the best thing that could have happened to us, for it will bring all the men into a common line of resistance, and we shall win.'

'The men at our works are not so much in agreement as I should like to see,' said Bertie. 'Some of them, I know, will hang back when the moment for action comes.'

But Jacob was more hopeful. He contemplated a double stroke of policy. The power of combination was to be brought to bear equally on Parliament and on the employers. All the trades in London were to leave their work on the same day, march in procession to Hyde Park, and there demand an Eight Hours Act. Such a huge demonstration of workmen as this would be had not hitherto been witnessed in the history of the world.

Meantime there really was movement, though Jacob Dean greatly exaggerated its extent. He was not alone in doing so, how-

ever. The workmen of certain selected trades had sent in a demand for an eight hours day. The *Hour* commented on the fact in language that was so bitter as to seem vindictive. 'The working classes,' it said, 'are determined to bring trouble on themselves and loss on their employers in foolishly persisting in an impossible and wrong-headed course. If it were not that the trade of the country would suffer, we should be heartily glad if a strike were to take place; for it would readily bring the men to see the folly of their position, and it would be some time before they would make any similarly unreasonable demands. In our opinion, the men have been petted and spoiled. Whilst they have been making good wages and working reasonable hours they have had too much of their own way, and a set of turbulent demagogues has filled their brains with silly fictions—if, indeed, they have any brains to fill. It would be greatly to the public advantage if such

men could be dealt with here as they would at once be dealt with in St. Petersburg. Nothing better could happen than if they were to be shipped off to some country where their hours of work would be so many as to leave them no time for plotting mischief and for encouraging discontent. Men like these are the worst possible enemies of those they pretend to serve.'

Such writing pleased Jacob Dean and the employers equally. It produced resolution on both sides. The masters became determined to defy the men ; only they did not call it defiance—they called it teaching a salutary lesson, and vindicating the rights of capital over labour. The *Hour* became their text-book ; it supplied them with arguments and reasons, and convinced them that their duty to their country demanded that they should break the back of the Unions.

The men, on the other hand, were exasperated by the daily tirades against their order. Many of those who had been luke-

warm became somehow convinced that their whole welfare depended on an eight hours day.

It must be confessed that their notions of the benefit they were to derive from the shortening of their working hours were not always of the clearest or the manliest kind. Working men have had so few advantages in the past, and so few opportunities of indulging those higher aims which give dignity to manhood, that there is some room to excuse them if, when they see ampler opportunities in prospect, they dream of using them for base purposes.

The trades were so far combined in a common purpose that they all sent delegates to a general meeting. There was hope at first of avoiding a strike, though not in the mind of Jacob Dean, who, however, kept himself aloof in these preliminary business proceedings. His turn would come by-and-by.

A circular was drawn up and despatched

to the Association of Employers. It was moderate in tone, but decisive—grandiose, but firm. It asked for the reduction of the hours of labour to eight hours per day, and it requested an answer at an assigned date.

The answer came much earlier than was expected, and the terms in which it was couched, and the names by which it was signed, exasperated the men greatly, and added anger to their determination.

'So they have called the lawyers in, have they?' said one of the delegates. 'It seems quite plain that nothing will serve us but a strike.'

The delegates had hoped to get what they desired by the gentler means of arbitration. But this legal interference startled them, and they began to 'smell' what one of their members called a 'rat.'

If the employers had canvassed all the solicitors in London to see which would best serve their purpose, they could not have

found a firm more capable of awakening the angry resentment of the men.

'They might have treated us with becoming respect,' said one of the more intelligent of the delegates, as he walked home with some friends. 'They seem to forget that a trade meeting of men is as important and as respectable as a trade meeting of the masters.'

'Ah,' said Bertie Shelburne, who was the representative of his trade, 'it is as my uncle Jacob said—we shall have to fight. The masters imagine that they can treat us in the same arrogant fashion when we are combined as when we are the separate implements of their schemes for making money. They will see!'

'Have you got that song ready yet, Uncle Joshua?' he said an hour later, breaking into the quiet of his uncle's room.

'What song, my lad?'

'Why, that song about the claims of labour. I wasn't joking when I talked about

writing it. It will make you famous, uncle, if it is half as good as our cause ; and we shall want it soon.'

'Well, I did think over what you said,' answered Joshua mildly; 'I did indeed. But you mustn't expect too much, Bertie. It's rather out of my line, you know.'

'But have you tried, uncle? How do you know what you can do till you try? Confound the pills and the potions! Put all those despicable rhymes aside, and let us have the "Chant of Labour."'

'Why, that is just what I have called it, my lad. How did you guess that, I wonder?'

'What you have called it? Is it done, then?'

'Only in the rough, Bertie. You know, we poets must revise.'

'Yes,

> '"And re-revise,
> Till all is ripe and rotten."

Where is it, uncle?'

'Why, it is here, my lad. I will read it over to you;' and so saying, Joshua Dean took a neatly-folded manuscript out of his drawer, advanced to the middle of the room, and commenced to read from a sheet of foolscap, monotonously sawing the air meanwhile with his arm:

'O brethren bent with labour, O sisters worn with toil,
Long have ye sown the harvest fields, and others reaped the spoil!
You groan and slave for fool and knave, but brighter days are dawning;
Above the hills the sun bursts up, and floods the sky with morning.
On you the primal curse was laid, on you the first decree;
But hark! A mighty voice awakes, and chants of days to be.
A grander scope, a wider hope, is opening out before you;
A freer sky, a sunnier heaven, will soon be bending o'er you.

Oh, wake, wake, wake!
The future beckons bright!
The long, dark night is sweeping past,
And the morning will be light.

Oh, heavy is the burden your shoulders long have borne;
Oh, weary are the ways you tread, and sharp your crown of thorn;
You march along, forlorn of song, with sob of stifled weeping,
And happier seem the quiet dead, who, after work, are sleeping.
But still, for you the future waits, for you the sunrise glows,
For you, at last, the wilderness shall blossom like the rose.

In days to be you shall be free, and neighbour with his neighbour,
And friend with friend, shall celebrate emancipated labour!
Oh, wake, wake, wake!
The future beckons bright!
The long, dark night is sweeping past,
And the morning shall be light.'

'Why, Uncle Josh,' said Bertie, 'it will do!'

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON THE EVE OF A DEMONSTRATION.

The rapid and confident action of the employers of labour, which seemed as if it were intended to provoke an immediate conflict, before complete arrangements could be made for a combination of the various trades, had the effect of greatly disordering the plans of the leaders, who were working, more or less amicably, but each with a jealous desire for the first place, with Jacob Dean.

Matters were far from being sufficiently advanced for a strike. A turn-out on the scale contemplated must have collapsed in a week or two for want of funds. It was necessary for Jacob to alter his plans.

'We mustn't play into the hands of the masters in that way,' he said. 'If they crush us this time our cause is lost for twenty years to come. Let the word go round quietly that there must be no strike, whatever happens.'

'And what are we to do then, Jacob Dean?' said another of the leaders. 'If we are to give up, we might as well leave the country, after what has taken place. The men will say that we have got them into a mess without having an idea of how we were to get them out of it.'

'We will give up nothing,' said Jacob energetically. 'Why should we? We will meet guile with guile. The masters hope to destroy us by forcing us to use at the beginning a weapon that we have contemplated only as a final resource. They have put their trust in their ability to compel hasty action on our part; we will conquer them by an indomitable patience.'

'And meantime we must tell the men

that we have thrown up the sponge,' said the former speaker.

'We shall tell the men nothing, except that we mean to hold the biggest labour demonstration that has ever been seen in the world,' Jacob went on. 'It has become more than ever necessary that we should exhibit our strength. Our combination is not yet what we hope to make it, but it is already such a combination as was never known before. We cannot strike yet, but we can show to the masters, to Parliament, to society, how powerful we have become, and how necessary it is to conciliate us. We must fill London with our processions; we must march to Hyde Park; we must present to the world the spectacle of a determined people.'

This brief speech, delivered in Jacob's clear, inspiriting voice, was received with a round of assenting applause, and when the meeting of labour leaders separated, it was professedly to make arrangements for such

a demonstration as had never yet been held.

The news of this intention thrilled through the country during the next few days, and in almost every manufacturing town in England it was resolved that a deputation of workmen should be sent up to London to take part in the great eight hours meeting in Hyde Park.

The authorities responsible for the preservation of the peace were determined that the critical moment should find them well prepared. They also determined to have their country levies. Arrangements were made for drafting into London large numbers of the police from the counties; troops were to be stationed, out of sight, at various points on the line of route which had been chosen by the organizers of the processions; and the barracks at Trafalgar Square and Knightsbridge were to be packed with soldiers.

As the time approached for the demon-

stration, the excitement of the little household in Magnolia Street grew to a painful intensity.

Bertie, Uncle Josh, Nelly, were all alike infected by it, and thought every hour a week until the day should dawn when the blow should be struck for freedom and equality of rights. Jacob took it, to all outward appearance, more calmly, but he was consumed with an inward fever that flamed out at unexpected times.

Only gentle, timorous Bessie could not be betrayed into any enthusiasm over the matter. They might call her mean and poor-spirited if they chose, but she was terribly afraid of harm occurring to those she loved, through their show of public spirit. How could a woman, a weak, timorous, clinging, dependent creature, incapable by nature of taking comprehensive views, be expected to sympathize entirely with anything so impersonal as "a cause"? The very name inspired her with a thousand fears.

Her quick, maternal fancy pictured scenes wherein her Bertie, heroic and utterly regardless of self, figured as a victim, a scapegoat, a martyr. It was all very well for Jacob to hold forth upon the wrongs of the labouring classes. Individually he had no grievance to complain of. For a working man he was very comfortably circumstanced indeed. Why couldn't he let well alone, then? For her part, she believed that drink was at the bottom of more than half the misery he quoted in defence of his arguments. And if he must needs put his finger into other folk's pies, why must he insist on infecting her with such wild, unusual ideas? She had no patience with such nonsense! Besides, if Bertie had his rights he would be fighting on the other side. There was the queer part of the position. If Bertie had his rights? Well, she began to hope now that Bertie would get them some day.

But since Bessie was afraid of her

brother, she did not give voice to these alien and coward sentiments in his presence, only contenting herself with grumbling a little to Bertie and Uncle Josh when he was out of the way.

Even Nelly, little, pale-faced, suffering Nelly, snubbed her aunt fiercely for throwing cold water on their eager hopes and ambitions.

'But you are old-fashioned and nervous, you know, Aunt Bessie, so one must make allowances for you,' said the lame girl with contemptuous toleration; 'but when one thinks of it all, it is like fire—it is like wine running through one's veins. I know now how the ladies must have felt in olden times, when their knights went forth to battle wearing their true loves' favours in their casques. I know now what it is to belong to heroes.'

Aunt Bessie looked at the lame girl's dark eyes, all glowing with fire and enthusiasm, and the tiny fingers clasping and

unclasping themselves with nervous energy upon the small palms, and recognised the impossibility of checking Nelly's ardour, even while she sighed over the waste of nervous force going on within the little creature. It would be strange indeed if the child did not have a collapse when all this fuss was over.

And Joshua was equally impervious to reason and common sense, equally impracticably exalted. For once his genius had received some recognition from his younger brother. Josh's chant of freedom pleased Jacob's ear. It had a grand ring about it, he said—a ring that would make it 'catch on' at once, as, indeed, was the case.

And Joshua felt his heart swell within his breast as he pictured to himself a mass of people all marching along to the ringing rhythm of his words, which had been set to music of a like character by another genius who was involved in the movement.

In those days Joshua the poet walked

as upon air. He was one with the Immortals. His voice should be the voice of the people. They should look upon him as a bard, a prophet, a seer. His name should be handed down to posterity as the poet of freedom, the singer of a new and splendid Homeric epic. Joshua Dean, the maker of rhymes to order, the grovelling poetaster, who had been forced by the pangs of hunger to prostitute his precious gift by setting forth the praises of the sordid wares of the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, was defunct, and in his place lived the trumpet-tongued prophet of liberty. He felt in those hours of rapturous intoxication that it was well to have lived.

Bessie's common-sense could make no headway against such enthusiasts as these, and even Bertie refused to listen to the maternal voice when it held forth upon this topic. He had promised his uncle to stand by the cause, and he would go through with it. But he would promise her this, and this

only. He would be on the side of law and order where it was the side of justice also. He did not think that anything would be gained in the long-run by defiance of the existing order of things, and any lawlessness and blackguardism gave a handle to oppression and cruelty.

He was of opinion that humanity was progressing—for ever progressing to one great and glorious goal; that hereafter men should be as gods, knowing good from evil. But progress and evolution were always slow, and must be measured, not by the few centuries we can trace back, but rather by the eras of time that had passed since the beginning of the world. Nevertheless, he would stand by Uncle Jacob and by his order so long as they were in the right, and in the event of mischief accruing (a not unlikely contingency, taking into account the rabble who look upon a public demonstration of any sort as their harvest time) he would see that the man who had been

as a father to him had a bodyguard to protect him in the storm of his own raising.

When Jacob and Bertie had left to take up their responsible positions on that eventful morning, Nelly Dean called Uncle Joshua o her side and whispered something, begged some boon, at hearing of which he appeared startled and reluctant.

'What is it now, Nelly?' asked Aunt Bessie, peering over the top of her apron, with the corner of which she had been wiping her eyes, tearful from the parting with her darling. 'You mustn't bother your uncle with your fads and whimsies, to-day of all days. I dare say he'll be off to see the show, like the rest of the foolish menfolk. His head is turned because Jacob praised his rhymes.'

Some of her peevishness found vent in Bessie's tone of contempt. Jacob she did not dare to tackle. Bertie put her aside with a careless kiss; but it would be queer

if poor feather-headed Josh did not feel the weight of her bitter taunts. Joshua's face wore a rapt, exalted expression that day, which for the time being transformed it into something akin to beauty. Tramp, tramp, tramp, he heard the feet going, keeping rhythmic time to his chant:

> 'Oh, wake, wake, wake!
> The future beckons bright;
> The long dark night is sweeping past,
> And the morning shall be light.'

'How was it possible that anything should put him out' while such a glorious measure rang in his ears, while life set itself to such ennobling music?

'You do not understand, dear Bessie,' he replied, with touching gentleness. 'It is not because the rhymes are mine that I—I am pleased. It is because the voice of those who suffer wrong and injustice has spoken, and will speak, through my poor words. Ah, Bessie, do not be hard and unkind, or you may be sorry for it some day!'

His unwonted humility touched Bessie's soft feminine heart, and she held out her hand to him. He took it, and kept it within his a moment.

'I did not mean to be unkind, Joshua,' said Bessie tearfully; 'but it's a bit hard on me too, you know.'

'Never mind, Bessie; don't cry, and try instead to persuade this little adventurous spirit to stay quietly at home with you.'

'Nelly? Stay at home? I should think so, indeed!'

'And pray why am I to be kept here, eating my heart out, while others have all the fun and delight?' cried the girl, flaming into sudden passion. 'Is it not enough that I could never play like other children—never run, and dance, and leap for enjoyment of my young life—but I must still be left here alone all day—all the long, long, dreary day, that would be such a glorious day had I but a part in it—a sight of its wonders, a sound of its rejoicing?

Aunt Bessie, you are cruel — cruel and unjust!'

'But, Nelly dear, how *could* you go?'

'Easily. Uncle Josh would take me; I know he will gladly do so if you will only not be so unkind, and will not keep throwing stumbling-blocks in the way.'

'What would your father say?' faltered the perplexed Bessie.

'He will not know until he returns; and then, when all is well and triumph has come, he won't mind such things. Come, aunt, be good to me. Don't you think God has given me enough to bear without your adding to my trouble by depriving me of my heart's desire? Uncle Josh, *you* ask her! Do you think I shall sleep to-night if I don't hear all those people singing your chant? What is the use of being niece to a poet if one is not to witness his triumph?'

Joshua was weak, and easily tempted through his passion for approbation. He looked pleadingly at his sister.

'I could indeed manage to take care of her,' he said. 'You know, I am only going as far as Holborn. Jukes, the tobacconist, has offered me a place in his front window over the shop, and we could see and hear the procession as it passes without getting mixed up in it in any way.'

Bessie shook her head doubtfully.

'Well,' she said, 'you must take the risk, not me. I wash my hands of it—and so there!'

Nelly laughed with delight.

'Come here, you dear old silly Aunt Bessie!' she said. 'If I could come to you I would, you know. There!' and with her small arms clinging round Bessie's neck she kissed the motherly forehead. 'I shall be safe enough, you silly! Oh, and shan't I join in the singing of Uncle Josh's chant:

'"The long, dark night is sweeping past,
And the morning shall be light."

Uncle Josh, it thrills one all through!'

CHAPTER XXV.

A POET'S DEATH.

It was only a very partial success, after all, this great demonstration of labour. Intelligence of the threatening preparations of the authorities had been allowed to leak out, and recent experience had taught the working classes that processions through the London streets were apt to be attended with broken heads, and to be followed by imprisonment. Jacob Dean himself had 'done time,' and there were many others with a similarly sad experience.

All these could be depended upon. They were among the most resolute of the agitators, and they had the reputation of heroes to sustain.

But after the first excitement was over large numbers of the working men held back, and these were chiefly of the more skilled, reliable, and settled class. Their defection was a disaster. Then the jealousies of the leaders broke out. They made reckless charges against this or that man in public, and they scarcely spoke to each other in private. Ultimately it became uncertain, up to the very day of the demonstration, which sections of the workmen would take part in the march to Hyde Park, and which would hold altogether aloof.

Wherever Jacob Dean's immediate influence was felt, seconded by that of Bertie Shelburne, the men remained enthusiastic and determined, and Jacob's influence was wide enough to ensure a striking demonstration, even if the defections realized his worst fears.

In the event, those fears were realized completely. The whole work of organiza-

tion at last fell into his own hands and those of Bertie ; but to these two the idea of abandoning their plans never presented itself for a moment. They would go through with what they had undertaken, whatever the danger to themselves, whatever the authorities might threaten, whatever might be the risks of failure, even.

The most widely diffused of human qualities is pigheadedness. It is common to the very dull and the very intelligent ; it may be exhibited in practically the same forms by the workman in his club, the shopkeeper on a jury, or the statesman in council. It sometimes breaks up a friendly society merely, and sometimes enables guilt to escape from justice, and sometimes involves nations in war. But wherever it may appear, and whatever it may effect, it disguises itself in its possessor as natural resolution, manly courage, profound wisdom, a devoted following of the conscience.

Over this matter of the demonstration

Jacob Dean and his nephew had unquestionably become pigheaded. They anticipated at least a partial failure, and they persevered; they were not without apprehensions of disaster, to others as well as to themselves, and they determined to go on.

But could Jacob have been aware that Nelly would be among the demonstrationists, imperilled by the giant he had called into being, the pigheadedness that he called courage must surely have broken down.

The procession which uncle and nephew were to command was to assemble in the East-End, pass through the City, and proceed by Holborn and Oxford Street to the Marble Arch. Other processions were to assemble in South London, to meet on the Embankment, to pass through Clubland, to take the route along Piccadilly, and to enter the Park at Apsley House.

Whether these latter processions would be reasonably large, or would number a few

thousands only, was a thing quite uncertain to Jacob Dean. That the gathering in the Park would fall far short of the dimensions he had meant it to assume he was now well assured, but it was impossible to foretell the whole extent of the desertion.

As for his own procession, it made a not unimposing array. It was accompanied by bands and banners; at its head were solid masses of men six or eight deep, and it trailed off behind almost as far as the eye could follow it. That it was only in part composed of genuine workmen, that the proposed demonstration had been hailed in some quarters as a signal for rapine—these things could only become evident through the development of events.

Joshua Dean, bearing Nelly in arms that were too feeble even for so light a burden, proposed to come up with the procession as it passed Snow Hill. Whilst he was yet in Farringdon Street the music of the bands reached his ears.

'Listen, Uncle Josh,' said Nelly, 'they are playing the "Chant of Labour":

'"But hark! a mighty voice awakes, and chants of days to be."

How splendidly it goes! The voice has awakened, Uncle Josh. There, it is taking up the chorus! Listen well, Uncle Josh:

'"The long, dark night is sweeping past,
And the morning shall be light."'

The easily impressionable nature of Nelly Dean was excited beyond bounds. She thrilled and trembled as the music rose and fell. She seemed to feel new strength in her limbs, and the need of marching.

'Oh, put me down, Uncle Josh!' she said, forgetting her feebleness; 'I want to keep time to the music with my feet.'

But Joshua did not heed or hear her. He, too, was filled and carried away by the moving, strenuous melody of the chant. It is but seldom in the world's history that the dreams of a poet find such fulfilment. How many, even of the great ones, have heard their words echoing from ten thousand

throats? Such bliss is inevitably intoxicating. Poor, weak, unpractical, inexperienced Joshua lost his head at once, of course. As the words of his chant resounded his heart leapt up. He became unconscious of the burden that he bore, and oblivious of his surroundings. It no longer seemed to be the solid earth on which he trod.

> 'Oh, wake, wake, wake!
> The future beckons bright,'

sang the processionists. Involuntarily his step quickened, until it fell into the rhythm of the swinging music, and, his eyes glowing with the fire of satisfied pride and wild enthusiasm, he fell in with the marching crowd of men, himself a processionist. For once in his hard, narrow, unideal life he was intensely, supremely, unimaginably happy.

But Nelly, whose feelings were liable to more rapid changes, and whose enthusiasm did not deprive her of the power to observe, began to be a little afraid by this time.

The faces around her were grim and determined; many of them cruel, vindictive, bloodthirsty. The unclean beasts of prey, the human ghouls that any such excitement brings from their dens and lairs in search of plunder, were treading close on the heels of the genuine sons of labour. Nelly Dean had never seen such faces before, such scowling brows, such gleaming eyes, with unholy fires burning down in their sombre depths. They would haunt her dreams hereafter, she felt sure. She clung to Uncle Josh in wild terror, and begged him to take her from amongst them at once.

Then, with a sigh, Josh slowly awakened to the realities of things. He was weakly proportioned, and although Nelly was but a child in weight, he was ill-fitted by nature for the carrying even of her slight form for such a distance. He looked round to discover his situation. Where was the sign of his friend Jukes, the tobacconist? Alas! it must have been passed some minutes

since, and there was no turning back. Being once in the procession, Joshua saw that he must remain there. He now perceived—what had not struck him before—that it was not only the processionists who filled the streets and were moving forward. They were outnumbered, indeed, by the dense trooping masses of people on either pavement, and keeping the lines between these and the men in procession were what seemed to Joshua to be policemen innumerable. Some were stationed at brief intervals, immovable; but many were on horseback, with swords by their sides, and these went forward as the procession moved along. They were subjected to a running fire of chaff, and now and then a stone hurtled through the air.

'We cannot turn back now, Nelly,' said Joshua. 'We have passed Jukes's shop. We must go on until we see some quiet street to turn into.'

But there were no quiet streets. On the

contrary, every outlet into calmer places was packed full of women and men. Joshua felt that he must go on until he could go on no longer. There was no other resource for him ; and so, wearied, somewhat crestfallen, with a heart no longer pulsing to the music of his chant, he toiled onward with a brave weariness which brought him constantly nearer to despair. To drift into this dreadful procession had been a simple thing indeed ; to get out of it was almost beyond human power, and to break down was not only to betray weakness on his own part, but to expose his crippled niece to dangers which he was only now beginning to comprehend.

The procession had grown to enormous dimensions. There was no longer any pretence of order in the march. The new accessions did not take their place behind, as they would have done if they had been amenable to orderly arrangement, but swelled the column on either side. All the

ragamuffinism of London seemed to have resolved to exhibit itself, and it was in one of its worst and most mischievous tempers. The heart of the procession kept together, much as it had started, and Joshua's chant was still resounding ; but the real processionists were now lost in a forward-pressing mob.

And the mob was dangerous. Stones flew towards the police, and were returned from the pavement. The interchange of missiles became more frequent as the crowd drew nearer to its goal. The number of marshals was absurdly inadequate to the occasion. Once, Joshua Dean saw his brother Jacob press forward to quell some disturbance in the rear, and he stooped down lest he and his burden should be seen. The policemen were losing their temper, and occasionally riding into the procession in a dangerous way. One man, more angry and more thoughtless than the rest, rode his horse in the direction from which he had

supposed a stone to come. A man, struck on the shoulder, fell under the horse's feet. There was a roar of indignation, and that part of the procession came to a standstill. The processionists in the rear pressed on, unknowing of the obstruction, and with their bands still playing Joshua's 'Chant of Labour.' The officer who was nearest at hand, alarmed at the stoppage, hearing the cry of rage at the sight of a man trampled underfoot, galled by a stone which had struck his helmet, ordered a charge.

Joshua Dean was the only man in that part of the procession who was still plodding on. He had become too weary to observe anything; he only felt the need of still pressing forward, and he elbowed his way through, as nearly as possible to the edge of the crowd. Far behind him rolled the words of his song; at his elbow were men raging and cursing. He was equally unconscious of songs and of curses; he only felt that he must go on or fall. He

stumbled forward, forward, forward, to his death.

Joshua was only conscious of danger when it was too late to avoid it. For one moment he saw the form of a horseman looming before him, huge and overwhelming ; the next he had, with a cry of terror and despair, managed to throw Nelly away from him, out of the reach of those terrible iron hoofs ; then he was struck to the ground, and the crowd, now pressed forward from behind, passed over him regardless, singing his chant as they crushed the life out of his poor feeble body.

'Oh, wake, wake, wake!'

rose the words of the chorus, and Joshua became aware that his own words were sounding his death-knell as he lay crushed and broken on the ground. They seemed to have a grim irony in them :

'The long, dark night is sweeping past,
And the morning shall be light'

—the last words that he heard on earth.

They sent a thrill to his heart even as he lay on the hard stones of the street, with his bones broken and his life departing. A horse set its hoof on his forehead, and there was an end of all.

The weary spirit was liberated in its moment of triumph. Joshua Dean, the failure, the unknown scribbler, lay on the pavement almost unrecognisable, and quite dead. He had supplied labour with a voice, and he died as, multiplied by many thousand voices, it still sounded in his ears.

Perhaps at that moment of time another being was born into another sphere of action, in which all capacities have full scope and all aspirations are fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BERTIE TRIES TO PREVENT MISCHIEF.

Of what had happened to Joshua and Nelly, Jacob Dean knew nothing, and Bertie knew nothing. They were both beginning to feel that their hands were terribly full. In its march through London an orderly procession is apt to become a mob. It starts a few thousand strong, and it swells as it goes. Every street and alley and court adds its contingent. All the idle, the miserable, the destitute, the dishonest, swarm out of their rookeries and join themselves to the marching throng, until the original processionists bear to the whole marching mass of humanity the proportion which a comet bears to its tail.

In London there are from ten to fifteen thousand habitual criminals, and all of these who were not in gaol were now on their way to Hyde Park, and the fire which burned within each of them was the desire for loot.

What honest man, finding himself in the position of leader, and making a discovery like this, would not wish to draw back? Jacob Dean, who had been looking forward to this day as one which would finally secure the triumph of labour, would with perfect willingness have made a sacrifice of his life if he could have led these thronging thousands of men quietly back to their homes. His brother's 'Chant of Labour' was ringing in his ears, but this, he now felt, was not the way in which its aspiration was to be realized. Nothing, so far as he knew, had up to this time happened of a nature to cause grave apprehension of what might follow; and yet it seemed as if the air palpitated with danger to the public peace.

Why had he brought these people to Hyde Park? Why had he not taken them eastward instead of westward? What danger could there have been, and how could the movement have suffered, if they had held their meeting at London Fields? Here, if riot broke out, the possibilities of mischief were simply enormous. All aristocratic London lay around them, the London of wealth and luxury and ease. There was a continuous blaze of tempting shop-windows from the Holborn Viaduct to the Marble Arch. Should the worst element in the crowd find itself stronger than the police, it might sack all London from Hyde Park Corner to St. Paul's.

Joshua's 'Chant of Labour' was now drowned in oaths, fierce cries, a constantly increasing turbulence. The two processions were pouring in at opposite sides of the park. There seemed to be no end to their numbers. The few thousands which had set off in the morning were swollen beyond

all counting, and were almost lost in this vast gathering of the London scum. The keeping of any decent resemblance to order had become out of the question now. The approach to the open green space on which the platforms were stationed was made by a series of rushes, by which the ranks of the genuine processionists were hustled and broken. The confusion was increased by the mounted police, whose horses were continually at the heels of the mob, terrifying those who were timid, and exasperating those who were on mischief bent.

'Who are you a-shovin' of with that there horse?' demanded a forbidding-looking giant of a man, who a moment before had seemed disposed to push everything before him.

The reply of the policeman was a stroke of his baton, which unhappily, as it afterwards turned out, was badly aimed.

There was a man carrying a banner a few yards away. The giant tore his way into

the crowd, wrested the pole from its bearer, and would have used it as a weapon against that mounted policeman; but he had now been carried far forward by the crowd, and there was a dense mass of surging heads between himself and his enemy. But the instinct of mischief had been roused. Using the stock of the banner to clear his way, he now forced himself towards the front, distributing hard blows here and there, and being attended by a chorus of curses and threats.

'Make way there, mates—make way there!' he shouted. 'You ain't a-going to march without a banner, are you? That ain't the way to get the eight hours! Let's have this bloomin' banner to the front!' and, so saying, he pressed forward until he came face to face with a platform on which Bertie Shelburne stood, surveying the vast, tumultuous, threatening crowd with dismay in his heart. It was a new experience to him and very different from anything that he

had dreamed of. He felt lonely, too, for none of the other leaders were beside him, and his only companion in his elevated position seemed likely to be this ruffianly-looking scoundrel with the red flag, who now leaped to the platform, shook him ostentatiously by the hand, as if they were friends of long standing, and then, giving a great circular wave to his flag, turned to the crowd and exclaimed :

'Three cheers, mates, for the eight hours!'

The answer was a tremendous, reverberating roar, for, whether the bulk of the concourse was interested in the eight hours or not, everybody had obviously come there to shout.

'This young un's goin' to speak to you just now, I s'pose,' said the ruffian with the flag; 'but I'm going to have my spoke in first. What I say is, keep yer eye on them there coppers. They're a great deal too active and intelligent, they are, a-trampling us down with their horses and a-mauling us

with their truncheons. Look here,' he said, taking off a greasy cap and pretending to wipe a stream of blood from his forehead, 'that's what I got from them coppers, and I mean to remember that, I do. They'll hear summick more of it before we've done to-day.'

'Who in the world is this fellow?' said Jacob Dean, who had come up at the head of his contingent, and hastily mounted the platform.

Bertie had no time to reply.

'I'm a bloomin' British workin' man, I am,' said the man with the flag, half to Jacob and half to the crowd. 'I'm one of them that's for eight hours a day, that's what I am! Another cheer for the eight hours, mates!'

'There must be very little speaking here to-day,' Jacob Dean said to Bertie—'just enough to keep them in order till we can organize the ranks for marching back again. It's all up for this time. There's nothing

that can be done but mischief. Here's all the scoundrelism of London come along with us. We're in a mess, Bertie, and we must get out of it as quick as we can.'

The man with the flag held up his cap and signalled for silence.

'Wot's this as you think they're saying, mates?' he inquired in thick but reverberant tones. 'They're sayin' as how, now you've come here, you might as well go home again. They're saying as how it's all up with the eight hours, and as how you're all d——d scoundrels. That's what these chaps here say. They're frightened of the coppers, mates; that's what's the matter with them. What did they bring you here for if they were frightened of the coppers? We ain't frightened of the coppers, are we? Not if I know it! There'll be some swag to be had before this here day's out! Look at all them there grand houses over there! That's Park Lane, that is. They're all nobs as lives in Park Lane. Wot do you say if we

goes to 'em and says, "Look here, wot do you say to goin' shares?"'

The last sentence was scarcely completed when Jacob Dean knocked the speaker from the platform with one blow of his strong fist. An angry cry arose from the fringes of the crowd. Jacob Dean at once faced the people.

'You cry out against me because I have knocked that dirty rascal off the platform, do you?' he said. 'Do you know what it is that he wants? You heard his question, didn't you? That man's a thief! Gaol-bird is written all over him, and he wants to make gaol-birds of you! Look here,' said Dean, raising his magnificent voice till it rang over the heads of the multitude, 'we started out this morning a procession of working men. Our hands are hardened with honest work. We have done no treadmill exercise, and we don't mean to do any. All that we want is an eight hours day. That's reasonable enough, isn't it? We

came here to prove that it is reasonable, and because there is plenty of room to meet in, and because we wanted London to see that we are in earnest. But we can do nothing to-day. That's what I was saying when that awful scoundrel put in his word. We didn't come here to make a riot, and the best thing we can do now is to go home again. There are too many rascals of that fellow's kidney about. I want all the eight hours men to close up their ranks and march towards the Marble Arch. Don't interfere with the police. Never mind what they do. They've lost their heads to day, and we must keep ours. Now then, right-about-face, men! Keep well together. There'll be no further meeting here to-day.'

Here he leaped down from the platform, followed by Bertie. They fought their way forward until they were at the head of the procession, which now had re-formed itself in a loose sort of way. But marching in any determined direction had now become im-

possible. The vast crowd surged here and there, as it was driven first one way and then another by the disorderly masses on its outskirts. There were fights with the police; there were cries that the soldiers were turning out; there were attempts at rescue where men were being dragged off by the constables. And all the time the mob was getting nearer to the centre of Park Lane. It was quite in vain for Jacob Dean to attempt to divert its direction. He was carried about like a piece of timber on a stormy sea; but all the while he was shouting and protesting and imploring. He foresaw the mischief that was impending; but to those who were not in his immediate neighbourhood, and could not hear what he said, he appeared to be leading the mob to the sack of the houses facing the Park.

A carriage was being driven hastily up Park Lane. The coachman wore the Dundridge livery; there were two powdered footmen behind. A fierce roar, followed by

a shower of stones, greeted it as it was perceived by the mob. There was a brief interval before more missiles were available, and meantime the carriage pulled up at a gate, and three ladies were seen to hasten up the steps of the house.

These were the Duchess of Dundridge and her two daughters.

As the door closed behind them the coachman applied the whip to his horses like a man distraught, and the carriage thundered on towards Oxford Street. A moment more and it might have been broken into matchwood.

'Come on, mates! Follow me, will yer? It's the Dook of Dundridge as lives there. Let's see what a Dook's house is like inside!'

It was the man whom Jacob Dean had knocked from the platform. He still bore the red flag, waving it abroad. His head was bleeding in earnest now, the blood making red streaks down his ruffianly face.

'You as mean to follow me, come on!' he

said, and the mob lurched forward at his words.

But here a young man shot in front, mounted the steps of the house, and turned his face to the mob.

It was Bertie Shelburne, still believing in the power of speech. He lifted his arm to command silence.

'Are you all madmen?' he shouted—'madmen or thieves?'

Before he had time to say more, the ruffian, who was now the real leader of the mob, had struck him down with the pole of the flag, and Bertie fell from the steps to the area, grievously injured.

There was at that moment a rapid trampling of horse. The mounted policemen had been gathered together for a charge. There was a gleam of red-coats behind them. The mob fell back before the trampling horses, and surged into the Park once more.

By this sudden charge of the police two men had been cut off from the others: the

giant with the red flag, standing on the steps of the Duke of Dundridge's house; and Bertie Shelburne, lying insensible by the basement.

CHAPTER XXVII.

COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

Most heroism is a mistake, for it is so apt to be misrepresented or misunderstood. The great heroic qualities require a large and conspicuous field. The world demands that the surroundings shall be impressive. The hero must be placed amid the proper scenic arrangements if he is to be appreciated and understood. To act nobly when such an event as an Indian Mutiny is in progress is to ensure for one's self an immortality of fame; but similar nobility of action in a Hyde Park row seems to be only an extra effort of disorderliness.

Bertie Shelburne had thought neither of

public praise nor of any other consequences when he had endeavoured to stay the progress of riot. Nothing had been in his mind but dismay at the turn which the demonstration had taken, and determination to do what might be possible to avert evil. To the official eye he had appeared to be one of the worst of the rioters, the leader of that section of the demonstrationists which was most obviously intent on plunder; and so, when he was picked up, insensible, within the area railings of the mansion of the Duke of Dundridge, he was carried off to the nearest police-station, attended to by the surgeon of that division of police, and securely locked up in a cell.

After the incident in Park Lane the riots had developed to more serious proportions than had ever previously been known. Among the processionists there were great numbers of men who would gladly have helped the police to protect property and suppress disorder; but between these and

such men as had joined the procession in the hope of pillage there was no attempt to discriminate. It seemed to be assumed that those whom Jacob Dean had led to the Park were all criminals together. The police, galled beyond endurance, seemed to lose all discretion and self-control. They charged at every remnant of a flag, at every rosette, at every group which endeavoured to form itself into order for the march home ; and, as was inevitable under such circumstances, there was a constantly enlarging area of conflict. When the troops were called out and the tumult was quelled, fortunately without further bloodshed, it was found that at least a score of men, without counting poor Joshua Dean, had been killed, whilst the wounded had to be taken to the hospitals in batches.

Society thought far less of the carnage than of the danger to which it had been exposed. It persuaded itself that a revolution had been averted by the energy of the

police, and the brief feeling of terror which it had experienced was succeeded by a vindictive fit of savage intensity. The numerous arrests made on the day of the riot, chiefly amongst those whose only anxiety had been to get back to their homes without harm, by no means satisfied the craving for victims. There was a clamorous demand for the apprehension of all who had taken part in the procession, which was obviously an impossible sort of proceeding ; but the police were ready enough in their application for warrants without any pressure from outside. Since the Monmouth rebellion there had been no such wholesale attempt to wreak vengeance in the name of law. The courts were provided with business which seemed likely to keep them occupied for months to come.

Jacob Dean had given himself up on the evening of the riots. He did not even wait to inquire as to what had become of Bertie. He was horrified and heart-broken at what

had occurred, and he simply walked down to Bow Street and said :

'I suppose you will want me. My name is Jacob Dean.'

'Oh, we know you well enough !' said the inspector in charge. 'You may expect a matter of ten years for to-day's work.'

Jacob made no reply to this observation, but quietly gave the few particulars that were demanded of him, and then marched off silently to the cell to which he was assigned. There his reflections were only less despairing than they might have been had he known what had occurred to those who were most near and dear to him.

It had been a sad day indeed for the Dean family : Joshua crushed to death under a horse's hoofs ; Bertie Shelburne apprehended, whilst bruised and insensible, on a charge of riot and attempted pillage ; Jacob with nothing to look forward to but a long imprisonment. And Nelly ? What had become of poor little Nelly ? Was it her

good or evil fortune which raised up a deliverer when she was thrown from her uncle Joshua's arms? A strong young processionist snatched at her dress as she fell. A moment more and she would have shared Joshua's fate; but she was lifted up by vigorous hands and borne out of further reach of harm.

'Are you hurt, dearie?' said the kindly voice of her rescuer.

'Oh, I feel as if my leg were all broken to pieces!' Nelly replied, and then, as a spasm passed across her features, she fainted away.

Her deliverer crushed his way through the crowd. The dense mass, which Joshua had felt to be impenetrable, yielded with comparative ease to his firm muscles and resolute tread. He made his way down one of the streets off Holborn until he came to a chemist's shop.

'It is a case that I can do nothing with,' said the chemist, after an examination.

'The child was a cripple to begin with, and now she has sustained a compound fracture of the right leg. You had better take her to the Children's Hospital. It is only two streets away. My shop-boy shall guide you to it.'

The young workman took Nelly up in his arms again, bore her gently but rapidly to the hospital, and then pursued his way to Hyde Park, to be himself, before night fell, numbered amongst the slain.

But Jacob Dean found comfort in his cell in reflecting that Nelly was safe in the little house in Magnolia Street, with Bessie and her uncle Josh. It was too much to hope that Bertie would not be included in the prosecutions that must follow the riots. He would probably be treated as a chief offender, for his prominence had not been less than Jacob's own.

'However, Nelly will be all right with Bessie and Josh,' Jacob assured himself. 'It will be hard lines for them all, but if

Bessie only holds up they'll manage to pull through. One must think most of the lad if he should be in trouble, and I think I know something that may save him.'

Two days later Jacob knew exactly how matters stood. A lawyer, engaged by the Socialist organization, was admitted to his cell to obtain materials for his defence.

'This is a very serious business,' he said. 'You don't expect to get off, I suppose?'

'No, I don't,' Jacob replied curtly.

'That's just as well. Under present circumstances nothing that can be said, or even proved, in your favour has a chance of getting itself believed. We shall do our best, of course; but you must make up your mind for spending a few years in gaol.'

'I have made up my mind already,' Jacob said; 'we won't talk about that. Do you know anything of my nephew?'

'I know that he is in the same plight as yourself, except that the charge against him is even more serious, for he is accused of

leading a mob to pillage the house of the Duke of Dundridge.'

Jacob groaned.

'Have you heard anything of the folks at home?' he asked.

'I have heard something that will be very painful for you to hear—that is to say, I read it in one of the newspapers this morning.'

Jacob sat bolt upright on the bench of his cell, and looked questioningly into the lawyer's face. What could there be to hear that was worse than what he already knew?

'You had better read it for yourself,' the solicitor said; and he produced a newspaper from his pocket. 'I have other prisoners to see, and when you have read that you will probably like to be alone.'

The facts were curtly, and even brutally, stated. It was satisfactory, the newspaper said, that those who promoted such disturbances as those which had taken place two

days ago were sometimes themselves the chief sufferers by them. The man killed in Holborn at an early part of the day had been identified as the brother of Jacob Dean, the Socialist leader. He was the author of the 'Chant of Labour,' of which so much had been heard.

At the Children's Hospital in Blue Lion Square, too, there lay a little crippled child who gave her name as Nelly Dean. She had been carried to the hospital by a man who had left her there and gone away. She was believed to be Jacob Dean's only child, and was suffering from a compound fracture of the right thigh.

It would be impossible to describe Jacob Dean's feelings under the shock of this intelligence. He lay on the wooden bench of his cell and moaned. His agony almost transcended the limits of human endurance. To himself even it seemed as if he were the author of all the mischief that had taken place, and the death of Joshua and the acci-

dent to Nelly were like retribution. How had fate so ordered it that the pair should chance to make part of that tragic procession?

The next morning Jacob was taken before the magistrate, only to be remanded. There were so many cases on hand that it had been necessary to depart from some of the prescribed forms, and many of the less important prisoners had been brought up and summarily dealt with before Jacob Dean was produced in court. The remands followed one another from week to week, the time dragging on agonizingly for those who were again and again put back to await the convenience of the court.

At length, however, Jacob was produced for actual examination. He found himself side by side in the dock with his nephew. The two clasped hands, and stood gazing at each other with such fond but sorrowful intentness that the charge had to be twice repeated before they heard.

'Not guilty!' said Jacob in his firm, resonant voice.

'Not guilty!' said Bertie, with an air of equal confidence and resolution.

These two men were guiltless alike of evil deed and evil intention; but they both felt that circumstances told heavily against them, and they were both entirely hopeless of merciful consideration.

The charge was terribly heavy, and it was supported by the most astounding evidence. It clearly appeared, from sworn testimony, that Jacob Dean and his nephew must have led their followers to the Park with no other object than that of riot and plunder.

They had been conspicuous among the first of those who made the attack on Park Lane. Jacob Dean's previous speeches were quoted against him. They contained many passages to which a most unfavourable interpretation might be given.

But the amazement of the prisoners at

the case which had been made out against them did not reach its climax until the ruffian of the red flag had been produced as a hostile witness.

He represented himself as a very paladin in the cause of order. He had defended the house of the Duke of Dundridge against the younger prisoner and his followers. He had struck the prisoner Shelburne down with a flagstaff as he was ascending the steps at the head of a mob.

This prodigious rascal was quite unshaken under examination. He adhered to every point of his story, wearing a ridiculous air of virtue and heroism the while.

It was useless at this stage to produce the case for the defence. What was there to produce, indeed, except testimony as to character?

The last witness called was the Marquis of Carabas. There was a movement all through the crowded court as he made his way to the stand.

'You have seen the prisoner Shelburne before?' he was asked.

'I have.'

'When did you see him last?'

'On the day of the Hyde Park riots.'

'What were the circumstances?'

'They have been faithfully described by the last witness, who had mounted the steps of the Duke of Dundridge's House with a red flag in his hands. Shelburne leaped forward in advance of the mob, whereupon the last witness struck him down.'

'Where were you at that time?'

'I was at the Duke of Dundridge's, watching events through the window, and preparing to defend the house against attack.'

'You had known the prisoner Shelburne before this, had you not?' asked the defending counsel when the Marquis's examination was concluded.

'I had seen him twice before.'

'Are you not under some obligation to him?'

'I was formerly under a great obligation. He saved Lady Nora Challoner from an accident that must have been very dangerous, and possibly fatal, about a year ago.'

'What do you mean by saying that you were *formerly* under a great obligation?'

'I mean that the obligation has ceased.'

'How?'

'Because it has since been made the occasion of a kind of blackmail.'

'It is an infamous lie!' cried Bertie, in an agony of indignation—'a black, infamous lie!'

The interruption made what is called 'a sensation in court,' and drew a reproof from the bench.

'You hear the prisoner's reply to that extraordinary statement,' said the defending counsel. 'Will you tell the court by whom you have been blackmailed? Was it the prisoner?'

'No; it was not the prisoner. It was an Irishman who was in his company at the

time of the accident. He has since presented himself at short intervals with what were really demands for money on the prisoner's behalf.'

'And you gave him money ?'

'I did, repeatedly.'

'You took his receipts, of course ?'

'I have the prisoner's receipts.'

Bertie, who had been listening with an amazed, crushed, protesting look, here broke in with another energetic denial.

'Prisoner,' said the magistrate, 'let me again impress upon you that you are represented by counsel. You can only injure your case by taking it out of his hands; though, to be sure, I do not see to what this cross-examination leads.'

'I am sensible, your worship,' said the defending counsel, 'that the unexpected statements just made can only be prejudicial; but I may take it upon myself to assure you that they will be met and amply refuted, so far as my client is con-

cerned, when the time comes to produce our defence.'

Here Jacob Dean leaned over and whispered something into counsel's ear. It is a mistake, as had just been shown, to put cross-examining questions without first having some pretty clear idea of what the reply must be; but the defending counsel had much faith in Jacob Dean's sagacity, and resolved to do what had been suggested to him.

'I desire to ask the Marquis of Carabas one further question,' he said.

The Marquis confronted him again in a calm and unconcerned manner.

'Your family name is Shelburne, I believe?'

'It is.'

'Have you noticed that the name of the younger prisoner is Shelburne also?'

'That was inevitable.'

'Has it struck you that there might be some relationship between you?'

'Any relationship is impossible—is absurd, in fact!' answered the Marquis quickly.

Those about him noticed, however, that a sudden pallor fell over his countenance, and that his hand, leaning on the edge of the witness-box, trembled visibly.

'There could be no such relationship unless you were aware of it?'

'That is so.'

'And you know of none?'

'I am certain there is none.'

'This cross-examination seems to be a waste of the time of the court,' said the magistrate.

'That will be afterwards seen,' said the counsel, who, feeling that he had made a further mistake, could think of nothing else to say. 'I have no more questions, my lord.'

'Do you propose to produce witnesses?' asked the magistrate, as the Marquis stepped from the box.

'I presume it is your intention to commit the prisoners for trial?'

'Certainly; and without bail.'

'Then I shall reserve our defence.'

'Committed,' said the magistrate; and as Jacob Dean and Bertie Shelburne stepped down from the dock their places were taken by men against whom similar but less serious charges were brought.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN HOSPITAL.

The long ward was lighted up by a pale yellow sunset, which sent a sickly glow across the pallid faces of the children in the beds, upon the crimson counterpanes, and upon the snowy sheets.

Clean, fresh, airy, even dainty, was this ward, with its bouquets of flowers, and its pictures and gaily-illuminated texts. How was it that the atmosphere was nevertheless so heavily weighted with some nameless, indescribable impression of fear and of suffering as to press painfully upon the consciousness of one unused to be there?

Lady Nora Challoner, at any rate, felt an

oppression of the heart as she walked slowly down between the row of little beds with her friend and schoolmate, Dorothy Sergeant, now staff nurse at the Children's Hospital in Blue Lion Square, at her side.

It was all new, strange, grim, gruesome, to the mind of this healthy, high-born girl, who was only beginning to awaken to the knowledge that life possesses a seamy side, and whose being rebelled against the knowledge, as a tacit reproach to its own careless happiness.

But the young creature was developing with wondrous rapidity, and could no more hinder or retard her own development than a butterfly can prevent its own emergence from the chrysalis condition. As the embryo butterfly must needs stir within the hard brown walls of its enclosing shell, so the embryo soul within Lady Nora grew restless and impatient, the walls of conventionality and of hereditary indifference to all outside the pale of narrow sympathies

becoming day by day more oppressive and more intolerable.

She was at this time an interesting psychological study, though she was not herself aware of the fact. The old happy, careless, selfish optimism was unconsciously being left behind. New questions were arising within her, new desires, new sympathies, new ambitions. However much she tried to silence them, these unusual voices would persist in making themselves heard. Gladly would she have revelled as before in the sheer joy of living in a beautiful world; but there had come to her a new feeling of the seriousness of life. She found in one of her favourite poets a full expression of her unaccustomed thoughts:

'Oh, happy country, myriad-voiced and dear,
I have no heart, no eyes, except for you;
Yours are the only voices I will hear,
Yours is the only bidding I will do:
You bid me be at peace, and let alone
That loud, rough world, where peace is never known.

'Yet through your voices comes a sterner cry,
A voice I cannot silence if I would;
It mars the song the lark sings to the sky,
It breaks the changeful music of the wood.'

It was while under the influence of some such restless and dissatisfied mood as this that Lady Nora determined upon paying a visit to the friend who had deliberately turned her back upon the world of beauty and fashion wherein she was born, and had sought out for herself a life of practical, unlovely, useful work.

At the time she first heard of it Dorothy Sergeant's decision had struck Lady Nora as ridiculous, unnatural, abnormal; a sort of social suicide, with no halo of romance to glorify it, or to justify its absurdity, for Miss Sergeant was young, beautiful, and wealthy, and had experienced no unhappy love affair that might have been adduced as a means of accounting for her strange conduct.

Now that Lady Nora had begun to wonder at life, she wondered also whether Dorothy had not had some right and reason on her side. Two years had passed since they had met before this occasion, but the

brief notes of the probationer were cheerful and contented. Work had filled a hitherto empty life, and now informed the most menial and unpleasant of tasks with a meaning and a purpose.

Though she was the youngest staff nurse in the hospital, Miss Sergeant was now recognised as thoroughly efficient and trustworthy. In her close-fitting gown of serge, and her plain white cap, Lady Nora found it difficult to recognise the lively girl who, a few years her senior, had infinitely surpassed her in the wildness of school frolics, the daring and audacity of young escapades.

But there was yet a sparkle of fun in Nurse Sergeant's gray Irish eyes, a ready laughter lurking about her pretty lips, even when she might be solemnly engaged in taking the temperature, administering a draught, or exhorting a patient to endurance. It was just this lingering touch of humour that appealed at once to the hearts of those beneath her care, and caused her

to be alike the most popular and the most successful nurse in the hospital.

Nurses as a rule are kind, but, in a certain sense, remote. However soft-hearted they may be in the first instance, incessant contact with every form of suffering tends to develop a manner which, in its perfect composure, has a way of appearing hard and unsympathetic. Lady Nora glanced from one pallid face, drawn into premature lines through suffering, to another, whose hard, bold, black eyes, rimmed round with dark circles, glared defiance at a world with whose unkindness the small creature seemed to have made acquaintance through all its poor little seven years of life.

'Oh, Dolly, how can you bear this every day?' she said, in a low and stricken voice, as she shuddered under the sound of a childish oath coming from a pair of poor, quivering baby lips, under the stress of some great spasm of agony.

The nurse stooped and raised the poor little head that had slipped from the pillow before she answered.

'What is there for *me* to bear?' she asked softly. ''Tis they who have to bear it all, poor wee darlings! If one only *could* bear a little of it for them sometimes! But to have to stand by and see them suffer, when we can help them so little—that is where the hardship lies, Nora.'

Lady Nora noticed how many eyes sparkled with delight, and how often little hands were uplifted in eagerness to hail the advent of Nurse Sergeant. Dorothy, she reflected, had at least found her mission.

'There is one child I should very much like to show to you,' the nurse said, with some hesitation; 'but I am never sure in what mood I may find her. She is a strange, abnormal, fantastic little creature. One cannot account for her existence by any theory of heredity that I have ever heard set forth. Born of people belonging to the

working class, her ideas are entirely foreign to her surroundings. She has a wealth of imagination quite Oriental in its rich extravagance, and conveying to one an impression of warm colour and overpowering odours—of gold, frankincense, myrrh, and ivory ; of roses, bulbuls, music, and wine. I hardly know how to describe it.'

'I think you do it extremely well, Dorothy. What an extraordinary child she must be, and why is she here?'

'She got hurt in the riot a while back, and, as this was the nearest place at which her injuries could be dealt with, they carried her here. For two days afterwards she lay without sense or motion—nothing but a faint fluttering of the heart to indicate that she was alive. It is strange to mark how tenacious of life are some of these frail organisms. Every day we are made sensible of this. The cases of collapse under injury are mostly amongst the big, the robust, the full-blooded. Creatures like this little

Nelly Dean seem to live on through everything. But really the child was not so seriously injured as might have been expected from the circumstances under which she was found. She was a good deal bruised, and one of her legs was broken, but it is more the shock to her system that complicated matters. The doctor says that under the most favourable conditions she could never have walked, because she has some chronic affection of the spine.'

The nurse led the way to the farther end of the ward, where lay the child of whom she had spoken. Lady Nora Challoner went close up to the bed, and looked down on the little patient, whose eyes were closed, but who was not asleep, to judge by the way her fingers moved rhythmically upon the counterpane.

Upon the pillow, in close conjunction to the cheek, were placed two or three golden daffodils.

Suddenly the lids of the child's eyes were

unclosed, and a pair of wonderful dark orbs gazed straight up into Lady Nora's face. The latter started involuntarily. The expression of these same eyes was so unusual, so vivid, so intense, as at first to be almost painful.

'Who are you?' asked the patient, making an unsuccessful effort to raise herself upon her elbow. 'Don't you know it's rude to come and stare at people when they are dreaming? Everyone does it, but I don't like it, all the same. Nurse Sergeant, why do you allow it?'

Nurse Sergeant laughed good-humouredly.

'Everyone doesn't know what a little bundle of nerves you are, Nelly. Besides, you were not asleep, so don't make a grievance of that.'

'Did I say I was? But if you were not as stupid as you are nice to look at, you would know that a person need not be asleep in order to have dreams.'

'Come, come, Nelly, you must not be

out of temper, or I shall have to hand you over to Nurse Smithson.'

'If you do, you'll certainly regret it. I shall decline to take anything whatever—either food or physic. And then, if they'll let me, I'll come back after I'm dead and haunt you. Let me ask you this: How shall you like to have a little, wee, lame ghost come hobbling up to your pillow every night, laying its cold, cold hand on your cheek, and smelling all of, oh! I don't know what?'

'Don't talk nonsense! Be nice and sweet and good, as you can be when you like, or Lady Nora won't understand why I am so fond of you.'

'*Are* you fond of me? Are you *fonder* than of all those others? Now, mind you tell me true, because I shall know if you only say pretty things to please me, and I like to be loved best of all.'

'You exacting little witch!' exclaimed the nurse; then she stooped down and

kissed the thin cheek with sudden warmth. 'You make one fond of you against one's better judgment. I haven't a patient under my charge that gives so much trouble as you.'

The child's eyes glowed with exultation. She threw her arms round Nurse Sergeant's neck, and held her in a vehement embrace.

'I don't care what you say, so long as you like me best!' she cried, with a passion almost savage in its fervour. 'I must always be first or—or nothing!'

'And will you allow me to like you also, and give me a little affection in return?' asked Lady Nora, with unusual gentleness.

The craving of this intense little creature for love appealed to her very forcibly when she recognised the weakness and physical incapacity by which it was accompanied. Who was likely to give a poor little lame girl enough to satisfy such a hungry soul as she evidently possessed?

Nelly Dean was better off in this respect

than Lady Nora guessed, for her father loved her with a tender and enduring love, and all the other members of the family doted on her in their several ways. But the kind-hearted girl only saw her as a solitary, melancholy child, alone in a public hospital; and tears came into the bonny blue eyes that looked down upon her.

Perhaps Nelly saw these tears, for her own eyes were as sharp as they were intense. At any rate, she softened somewhat, and nodded a gracious assent to Lady Nora's overture.

'Yes; you can come and see me sometimes, since you are a friend of Nurse Sergeant. She is a darling—isn't she? I'd rather you hadn't a title, though.'

'Sometimes I wish I hadn't one myself,' returned Lady Nora, twisting up her little mouth half ruefully. 'But what difference does it make to you, child?'

'We are all Socialists at home—dad, and Aunt Bessie, and Bertie, and I. I'm not

sure about Uncle Josh—Bertie says poets are artificial creatures, and that people should live poems, not write them. Still, Uncle Josh did live one the other day, I think. And perhaps I am not one either, out and out,' the child went on, slowly and solemnly, 'because I do not like to think of a world where there would be nothing but common people in working clothes, and no palaces, or castles, or princes, or anything pretty and rich. But, any way, I hate dukes' daughters!'

A sudden touch of venom shot into her voice as she made the last extraordinary statement. Nora wondered what 'dukes' daughters' had done to the little plebeian, to cause this alarming display of animosity. She laughed, but had not sufficient moral courage to confess herself one of the abhorred class.

'Why on earth should you hate *them?*' she asked.

But Nelly shook her head.

'Never you mind that. I have my own reasons, and good ones they are, though I am not going to tell them to you. You are rather nice, I think, and pretty, too, when you laugh and look merry, and you can come and see me again when you please. I'm very lonely sometimes, when Nurse Sergeant is off duty. My people are all in trouble, though I don't exactly know how or why. Aunt Bessie won't tell me, and she is the only one who comes to see me here. She just sits and cries and cries, and I can't get any sense out of her. But she always was a soft thing,' the child remarked, in a tremulous way, yet with a certain contempt in the tone. 'Oh, if I were only well and out of this place, to find out for myself what is really wrong! But to lie here and know nothing, and neither dad nor my little Bertie to come near me——'

Lady Nora grew tearful over the woes and anxiety of the small sufferer, but she

feared the effects of the hysterical weeping that broke out at this period, and summoning Nurse Sergeant (who had left them together), she kissed Nelly's wet cheek, and, with a promise of another visit shortly, left the hospital full of thought and new experience.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LADY NORA GOES ON A QUEST AFTER TRUTH.

Lady Nora kept faithfully the promise she had made to Nelly Dean. She frequently visited the Children's Hospital in Blue Lion Square, and became intensely interested in the little sufferer.

She learned upon inquiry that some of the relatives of the child were in prison awaiting their trial on the charge of inciting to, and taking part in, the late riots; that one of her relatives had been killed during the progress of the disorders, and that the poor heart-broken woman who occasionally came to visit Nelly was very hard put to it to hide these terrible facts

from the child, whose recovery the knowledge might retard, if, indeed, the shock of hearing it did not kill her outright.

Nurse Sergeant was delighted, therefore, at the frequent presence of Lady Nora, whose bright and wholesome personality helped to banish some of the morbid ideas haunting the mind of Nelly Dean.

What could be more strongly pronounced than the contrast between Lady Nora Challoner, the daughter of a ducal house, and this little child of the working poor? She in whose veins ran the bluest of English blood was entirely unpoetic, unimaginative, practical; the other, with no adventitious advantages given to her, either by culture or opportunity, was nevertheless fanciful, exquisite, poetic, with a sort of natural refinement and cultivation. Lady Nora was like a daisy or a primrose—a hardy, commonplace, outdoor flower, sweet, and fresh, and wholesome; Nelly Dean resembled some delicate exotic, the product

of careful nursing in an artificial atmosphere.

Lady Nora tried one day to describe to Nelly the delights of a spring morning in the woods; told of the singing of birds, and the budding of trees; pictured the young lambs in the meadows, the larks in the blue sky overhead.

To her surprise, Nelly Dean listened with something akin to indifference. The child knew nothing of the real world and its beauties. But she was happily all-unconscious of how much she lost by such ignorance.

In that world of her own into which she could float away at will, the flowers bloomed with a richer radiance, the birds sang in symphonies more bewitching. Under the golden glow of afternoon, or beneath the soft shimmering light of stars, Nelly had leave to wander in a realm whose exquisite perfection Lady Nora could neither have understood nor appreciated.

'Would you not like to be out some day, lying upon a breezy hillside among the heather and the fern, and watching the shadows of the clouds flit across the mountains? I can just fancy your delight, as some little brook danced down on its mossy stones, and the birds sang as though their tiny hearts would burst for very gladness.'

'I do not know,' mused Nellie slowly. 'It sounds very nice, I dare say; but I can imagine places and things that would give me far greater delight. Just fancy, instead——' and then she in turn went off into a rhapsody about an imaginary scene, painting it with all the vivid tints she could evolve from her moral consciousness, enriching it with every charm of atmosphere and sensuous beauty; filling it with noble life, with knights chivalrous and dames beauteous; and then ending by inquiring whether it did not surpass Lady Nora's simple hillside, with its heather and its purling stream.

'And it would be so tiresome to get to yours, you know! My back would ache, and my limbs tremble, even though I were to be carried all the way there. While now? See how simple it is! I have only to close my eyes, and shut my ears to the horrid noises here, and in a moment I am in as beautiful a land as heart can desire.'

'Yours is an enviable gift, my dear little one,' said Lady Nora. 'I will never attempt to rival in description your beautiful land again.'

When Nelly became thoroughly familiarized with the presence of her new friend, and had grown to trust, and in some degree to love, Lady Nora, she began to talk more freely of her home and its surroundings; about the people she loved, and who loved her; their excellences and their shortcomings. Lady Nora found these conversations very entertaining. They opened out to her new worlds of thought and speculation.

This life of ordinary working people—that is to say, people living in towns—which Nelly depicted so forcibly, was an entirely strange phase of existence to the country-bred girl. She knew all about the ways and habits of the agricultural labourer; but of those of the ordinary city mechanic she was utterly ignorant. And Nelly herself had not sufficient knowledge to acquaint her with the fact that the Deans were exceptionally refined and educated for their class. A family which, within its narrow limits, could boast of a deep thinker in Jacob, and an ardent scholar in Bertie—to say nothing of a poet in Josh—was surely above the average in point of brains.

But Nelly accepted her relatives as normal, and Lady Nora began to fancy that the working class of her native land must be throughout an advanced and generally progressive one.

It was some time, however, before the child could be brought to confess the reason

of her dislike to 'dukes' daughters,' and Lady Nora was exceedingly curious on this point, feeling herself slightly injured by the freely-acknowledged hatred, although she still would not bring about the revelation by any acknowledgment of participation in the unknown sins of these patrician ladies.

At last it came, and the result certainly proved as startling to Lady Nora as the first statement had been, and infinitely less amusing.

The little thing was lamenting the prolonged absence of Bertie, and ended by painting him with all the glowing colours of her imagination, until Lady Nora seemed to behold a young man beautiful as Apollo, strong as Hercules, clad in the garb of an ordinary British workman. At this incongruous picture she laughed outright, and Nelly chose to resent this laugh, as showing some disbelief in her own powers of description.

'You don't believe me? Just wait until

you see him, that's all! But that's the way with all you aristocratic people—for you know you *are* an aristocrat, in spite of your common-looking clothes.' Nelly did not appreciate the severity of style approved by a Bond Street tailor. 'You will take our work, our health, our lives, even; and still you won't look upon us as made of the same flesh and blood as yourselves.'

A speech founded on hearsay and inexperience.

'Do not be unjust, Nelly,' remonstrated Lady Nora, who perceived that a display of temper was imminent. 'We are not all so bad as you have been taught to believe. How about your darling nurse? You do not seem to remember that she is as much of an aristocrat as any of us. She gave up everything to come here, and to nurse such little ungrateful monkeys as you.'

'Was she like you once? Could she go to balls, and parties, and the opera when-

ever she chose, and do nothing all the day long? And could she wear fine dresses, and ride in a carriage, with flunkies behind and before?'

Lady Nora nodded assent.

'Poor Nurse Sergeant! But what a silly she was to give it all up, and come and live amongst sick children, and wear an ugly gown and cap, and put on dressings and plasters, and do such nasty work as that! I could never have done that, I am sure!'

'Well, does it not convince you that we *do* feel for you, and think of you as made of the same flesh and blood as ourselves?'

'Well, maybe some of you aren't quite without hearts. But there are others—I know of others—that are just brutally selfish and heartless.'

'I am sorry, Nelly, that your experience has been so unfortunate.'

'Oh, it isn't mine! I have no experience

of anything—except of just lying still and being taken care of. It's Bertie's experience I am talking about, and I certainly do resent *that!* Look here; I don't mind telling you what it was! It may make you cautious how you treat anyone who risks his life to save yours—as might be the case some day, you know. Bertie saved one girl's life in the Park by stopping her horse—yes, and he broke his wrist in doing it, and was laid by for ever so long. It wasn't that I complain of. And *he* never complained at all! Only I know that they hurt his pride amongst them somehow, for he couldn't bear any mention of the affair for ever so long afterwards. And they never sent once, or came once, to ask whether he was alive or dead! But what is the matter, that you are colouring up like that?'

'Nothing. I am listening, Nelly. Go on with your story. Did they make him no recompense—in money, I mean—for the time he lost and the suffering he under-

went? Surely they made things easy for him in that way?'

'Give him money? Offer my Bertie money for what he did? I should like to have seen them do it!'

'But are you quite sure of what you say, Nelly? And—and how did they manage to live—until he was—sufficiently recovered to work again?'

Lady Nora was much agitated. Nelly was pleased to watch the effect of her narration upon the lady.

'Oh, they managed somehow! I don't quite know. Uncle Josh came out well, and dad lent Bertie a little; and, altogether, they pulled through. But you won't wonder so much now at my dislike. *She* was a Duke's daughter. I'm very glad she didn't come to see him, all the same.'

'Why, you queer, changeable, capricious child! First you say your cousin was ill-used, and then, in the next breath, you state your delight at his usage.'

'It would only have made him more unhappy in the end.'

'I don't see why,' said Lady Nora, with a touch of hauteur.

'Of course you don't! But that's because you don't know the real state of the case. If she had come, and had proved herself as kind-hearted as she was beautiful, why, of course Bertie would have fallen more desperately in love with her than ever.'

'In love—with *me?*' ejaculated Lady Nora, in confusion.

'With you? Of course not, silly! With this Duke's daughter that I am telling you about. I don't see what you've got to do with it. You're not elegant, patrician, gracious. You are not a girl who can be described as "like a day in spring," are you? You are good, and I love you; but that other one, whom I have not seen, I hate.'

'Nelly, will you give me your aunt's

address, please? I want to go and see her for myself,' said Lady Nora hurriedly, and with great excitement of manner.

'And will you find out what is really the matter, and why neither dad nor Bertie comes to see me? Poor Uncle Josh I don't expect. He is always in the clouds. Besides, I shouldn't wonder if he got hurt a bit, too. He was with me when they knocked me down and trampled on me; and Aunt Bessie always begins to cry when I ask about him. You mustn't expect to get much sensible talk with Aunt Bessie, you know. She is always a weak sort of thing; but she's got the kindest heart in the world, and I'm glad the doctor is going to let me out next week, so that she may nurse me at home. Though nobody could do more for me than dear Nurse Sergeant has done. Still, home's home, you know, and they must miss me dreadfully.'

Lady Nora scarcely heard this long speech. She was in a state of mind alto-

gether new. She had been deceived on every side, and she must now find out the truth for herself. For once she must brave the wrath of the Duchess, by going alone to the house of the woman who could tell her the real facts of the case.

It would shock her Grace's notions of propriety, but what of that? A fury of righteous indignation had come to life within Lady Nora's soul, and, possessed by it, she was prepared to do and dare a great deal in the cause of truth and justice.

Nelly's innocent words had stung her to the quick. No wonder the poor should hate the rich, if this was how benefits were requited, services acknowledged. Upon the other phase of affairs, that concerning Bertie's admiration and hopeless worship of herself, the girl would not allow herself to dwell, lest it might cause her to hesitate in the performance of a plain and simple duty.

'Bowman,' she said to the maid who had accompanied her to the hospital, and who

now sat waiting in the hall until she was ready to return, 'you must go home alone. I will be back in a couple of hours' time; but there is no need for you to wait for me.'

'But what will her Grace say, me lady?' gasped the horror-stricken maid.

'Oh, never mind that! Just you leave that to me. Say that I would not allow you to wait. Say anything you please, only go. Go! don't you understand me?'

Lady Nora stamped her little foot angrily, and the maid felt bewildered between the orders of the Duchess on the one hand, and those of her young mistress on the other. Strange to say, there appeared on the face of the daughter, at that moment, an expression that reminded Bowman forcibly of the august mamma.

'But I—I shall lose my situation!'

'Oh no, you won't! I'll take care of that. Dear me, how obstinate you are, Bowman! Well, I'll tell you what you can do, since you are so punctilious. You can

go and amuse yourself somewhere for a couple of hours. Here's half a sovereign to do it with. Go to Madame Tussaud's, or Niagara, or a matinée, or whatever you like, so long as you keep out of my way. And then you can return here for me. Come, now, don't be stiff and disagreeable.'

Bowman sighed, and looked wistfully at the half-sovereign lying in her palm. The rule of the ducal house was a severe one, and did not permit of many holidays. The sun was shining brightly, and all the world would be astir. She had a cousin in the Life Guards, a fine, stalwart Norfolk man. She had met him in St. James's Park before. It was not far to the Park. She hesitated, and, like the rest of her sex in that particular, was lost.

Immediately afterwards Lady Nora ran to the door, hailed a hansom, and was whirled off to Victoria, there to catch a train to Clapham Junction, whence she proposed to proceed to Peppermint Hill.

CHAPTER XXX.

BESSIE'S VISITOR.

Time dragged on very slowly and heavily in the little house in Magnolia Street.

Poor Bessie was crushed to the ground by the accumulated weight of the family misfortunes. Never before, during the whole course of her simple life, had she been left to bear her trouble alone. Always she had found comfort and solace in the society of her strong brother, against whose stern rule she had frequently rebelled of late, but who was certainly as a rock of defence in time of adversity.

How quiet the house appeared, and how desolate!

Poor Josh ! He had never been held as of much account during his weak, innocent life. Bessie had never 'thought much of him,' as she said ; perhaps because his nature was so near akin to her own ; and, like all weak women, she loved men who were strong-willed and masterful. But it was astonishing how much she missed him, now that he was gone. His gentle, harmless personality appeared to be impressed upon every book she fingered, every scrap of paper she gathered together. When, after the simple funeral, she went up to his little garret, and saw, scattered about, the evidences of what he called his 'devotion to the Muse,' she was completely overcome, and sobbed as though her heart would break

It was a melancholy business, this putting away of the dead man's relics. His poor bethumbed, dog's-eared copies of the poets ; his pages of blotted and interlined foolscap ; his shabby garments even—each

demanded a separate meed of tears before they were all 'straightened up' or hidden away.

'He never harmed a living creature during all his life, poor fellow!' said the mourner to herself, as she stroked and smoothed out his coat, and brushed away the mud contracted during that last fatal, happy, triumphant march; 'never said a cross word, even! And yet they went and killed him, all the same! I cannot understand it all, try as I like! But I can see that I was right about that dreadful "cause," although not one of them all would listen to me when I misdoubted it. As if any cause was ever worth the life of a decent, quiet, honest man like Josh—to say nothing of my darling Bertie and that poor misguided, wrong-headed Jacob! Oh me! I wish I knew what to do to help them both! I feel sometimes as though the shame and the sorrow would kill me too, before it is all done with!'

Musing in this sad, depressing fashion for days and days does not tend to make people, especially nervous, sensitive creatures like Bessie, strong-nerved and self-reliant; and when a quick, impatient knock came to the door one afternoon, the poor woman immediately began to anticipate further misfortunes.

Her heart thumped against her breast like the piston of a steam-engine, and she could scarcely control herself sufficiently to answer the summons.

What was her surprise to see there, in place of the minion of law whom she had expected, a bright, pretty young lady, whose quiet dress marked her as different from the class to which Bessie was most accustomed.

'You are Mrs. Shelburne, are you not?' asked the visitor in a tone of eager impatience, and Bessie assented wonderingly. 'May I come in, then, please? I have much to say to you—questions to ask, and things to explain. Because, I cannot bear

to be thought ungrateful and selfish ; and indeed, indeed, I never knew, or it would all have been different !'

Bessie's astonishment deepened. Who could this bright, impetuous creature be, and what did she mean by her talk of selfishness and ingratitude ?

'Indeed, miss, I don't understand what you are talking of, but I shall be honoured if you will just sit down and explain things a bit. Though I'm in sad trouble at present —trouble that I feel fair 'shamed to mention to a stranger—though I'm quite certain my Bertie wouldn't have done anything wrong, or again the law, be it ever so ; else why did he say to me that very morning before he left, "Mother," says he, "I don't hold with breaking the peace, nor doing anything that isn't respectful to the authorities, only I'm bound to stand by Uncle Jacob and the men "? And this is what has come of it,' and the simple, tender-hearted woman subsided, sobbing, into a chair.

Lady Nora, for, of course, the visitor was that impulsive young person, felt very sorry for the poor thing, and responsive tears rose to her eyes. She patted Bessie's hand gently, and waited until composure came. That small, unlucky woman felt better now that she had someone to speak to, someone who would lend a sympathizing ear to her account of her manifold sorrows. Instinct told her that this was no cold, unsympathetic listener that fate had sent her.

'They will be acquitted,' said Lady Nora soothingly. 'You will see it will all come right in a week or two. You don't suppose people will be punished for doing nothing but trying to preserve order? Now, don't cry, dear Mrs. Shelburne! Cheer up, and have a bright face for them on their return.'

'Oh, I wish I could think so! But even then there is poor Josh—my other brother, you know—him that never did a wrong action or said an unkind word in all his life.

I was just busy putting away his bits of things when your knock came to the door;' and Bessie again subsided into tears.

Lady Nora was exceedingly moved when the pitiful tale of the poet's death was related to her in Bessie's homely language. There was something intensely pathetic in the idea of the poor fellow whom 'nobody minded much' dying to the sound of the chant he had made.

'But, lor! I didn't ought to be bothering you with all our family affairs, and me not even knowing your name; only when a body has been shut up by herself for so long, and never a neighbour to come and say, "God comfort you"—because Jacob he didn't hold with neighbours, such as come and gossip, at least, and them's the sort hereabouts—it does one good to see a kind young face like yours, and one's tongue runs on too fast, maybe.'

'Please do not apologize, Mrs. Shelburne. I am under too great an obligation to one

of your kin for anything you might say or do to prove irksome. I had better tell you now. I am Lady Nora Challoner, the girl whose horse your son stopped in the Park last year. If it had not been for him I might have been killed; I should certainly have been greatly injured.'

Bessie was silent for a few minutes after this announcement. A deep sense of injury had long brooded over her mind in connection with that affair. Her boy had been ungraciously treated by those proud aristocrats, for whose sake he had suffered so much. But she had never supposed that one of them would appear like this young girl—talk so kindly, look so tenderly, have, in fact, so much of the woman and so little of the great lady about her.

She felt annoyed with herself for having been betrayed into so much emotion. There was considerable dignity in the way she now spoke.

'My boy would never stand by and see

anyone in danger without doing his best to save them.'

'I am sure of that! Oh, I wish I could be sure that he had been rightly treated by those—those in whom I trusted! I can see by the way you look and speak that you are offended. And yet I am not so much to blame as you suppose. I am only a girl, and what can a girl do when they are all against her? Dear Mrs. Shelburne, do not be so hard. Let me tell you all about it before you judge me, and then—then if things are explained, and it is as I fear, I shall have something to say at home that they won't like. I hate being deceived!'

There was an explanation on both sides which certainly placed matters in a very different light to the parties concerned. Mrs. Shelburne was excessively indignant to find that someone had been practising upon the generosity of the Marquis in the name of her son, extorting money with which he would not have soiled his fingers.

'And, indeed, miss—Lady Nora, I mean —when my boy comes back he will find that mean scoundrel out, let him be as well hid as he likes; and then I'm sorry for him. Bertie will wring his neck, I am sure. For he's rare and strong is my boy, although I'm such a little body myself,' said Bessie, with pardonable maternal pride; 'but as for the Marquis, I don't think he's behaved too well, say what you like! He might have come here himself, and found out whether my Bertie was a low blackguard or not. But I dare say he knew better than to show his face in this house. There's queer things hid as may come to light some day; and then some folks as is high may find themselves low, as some folks as is low, like poor Bertie, may chance to be at the top of the tree, and able to look down on those others in turn!'

Lady Nora listened with astonishment to this rambling statement. She began to suspect Bessie of a vulgarity that she had

not hitherto shown. But she saw that the poor woman was overwrought and excited, and set herself to work to calm and reassure her. In this she succeeded to a marvellous extent. Once disabused of the idea that Lady Nora had behaved ungraciously, Bessie found herself growing more and more in love with the bright, frank girl, and talking to her as though they had known each other for years. There was, indeed, more in common between these two than might be readily supposed, considering the difference of their rank. They were both simple, and entirely without any sort of affectation, and consequently, both in their way, well-bred.

There was one subject that the girl dreaded to hear named, but the mention of which was happily spared her. This was the admiration which Nelly said Bertie had conceived for herself.

But the fact was that Bessie knew nothing whatever on this subject. It was only the sharp, jealous eyes of poor little

Nelly that fathomed the lad's secret. To his mother such an idea would have appeared extremely improbable. And he was a young man who made no confidences.

Bowman had to wait a long time over the two hours before her young mistress appeared on the scene again.

And, of course, the maternal wrath was at boiling-point at the house in Park Lane.

Things were not much better, either, when the real facts of the case came out. It all sounded too like a twopenny romance to suit the Duchess.

'It is of no use to scold, mamma,' said the unrepentant one impatiently; 'I felt as though the truth was only to be found out by going to the fountain-head, and, accordingly, to the fountain-head I went. And I hope that scoundrelly Irishman will get the kicking he so richly deserves. I suppose it would be useless to ask Carabas to do anything?'

'Yes, indeed! I beg you not to mention

the matter to him, Nora. He is looking ill and worried enough as it is, though I cannot get him to confess himself out of health. I wish Parliament was dissolved, so that he might have a change, and that these trials were over, for they seem to worry him, too.'

'I wonder what——' began Lady Nora, and then stopped. She reflected that, after all, it would not be well to arouse the curiosity of the Duchess about the mysterious words of Mrs. Shelburne. And the Duchess was thinking of quite other matters.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A NEW JOURNALIST.

Bessie Shelburne had another unexpected visitor in the course of a day or two. This was Mr. Wilbraham Tweed, editor of the *Drury Lane Review*. It was generally admitted that Mr. Tweed was one of the most remarkable journalists of the day. There was one section of the public which believed him to be nobly pursuing a divine mission; there was another, perhaps larger, section which found in him a compost of vanity, bad manners, imperfect education, a furious but misguided energy, and an unconquerable zeal for creating sensations. There were abundant materials for correcting

each of these impressions. Incapable of taking offence at what others thought of him—pleased by adulation, but not less pleased by such abuse as seemed a tribute to his power and an evidence of his prominence in the world—he was simple and almost childlike in his revelation of what he thought of himself.

'His *forte*,' it was once observed of another prominent public character, 'was omniscience.' In the case of Mr. Tweed it would have been necessary to add, 'and omnipotence.' 'If there were to be another Lord's Supper,' it was once profanely remarked, 'he would want to be in the chair.' Mr. Tweed believed with all the force of his soul in the power of the press, and he was honestly convinced that this power had never been so widely and so wisely exercised as by himself. He aspired not only to form Cabinets and to dismiss Ministers, but to rule kingdoms. He had personally instructed a great Northern potentate, in the

course of a short interview, as to his duties towards his subjects and his relations to Europe in general. He had, also by means of another interview, tutored the chief of one of the smaller European kingdoms as to the powers to be entrusted to an expedition which was about to set out with the purpose of colonizing the island of Barataria. The Pope had proved obdurate. Mr. Tweed had been anxious to enlighten his Holiness as to his true position and his great responsibilities, but Leo XIII. had successfully resisted all attempts to approach him, whereupon Mr. Tweed set up as a sort of pope on his own account. His telegraphic address was 'St. Peter's, London.'

Those who denounced him as a humbug were quite ignorant of his character. The basis of all his action was a sincere, if only momentary, conviction. He believed tremendously in the importance of all that he undertook, and still more tremendously, if that were possible, in his ability to make

all his undertakings successful. He wanted nothing for himself, except the reputation of being one of the moving spirits of the age. He was amply satisfied with the emoluments of his profession. He desired no larger sphere of activity than that which he found in his journal. To be editor and 'our special commissioner in one seemed to him the same thing as to be at the summit of things. As editor, he settled all public affairs at home; as 'our special commissioner,' he benevolently controlled the affairs of other nations and dynasties.

It is a quality of omniscience to survey with equal eye the infinitely great and the infinitely little. Though Mr. Wilbraham Tweed felt himself responsible for the proper management of Europe, he had also a quick eye for inquests and police cases. When the mountain in Emerson's little allegory reproached the squirrel with its unfitness for great tasks and heavy burdens, 'Neither,' retorted the squirrel, 'can you crack a nut.'

Mr. Wilbraham Tweed was the mountain and the squirrel in one. When he arrived at his office in the morning he knew all that was in the newspapers.

'Woman found dead in a cellar at Peckham,' he would say to one of his subordinates. 'Circumstances look suspicious. Just go down and see what you can make out of it.' Often enough the man so commissioned found himself able to make no more out of it than a paragraph. Many failures had to be set off against Mr. Tweed's occasional successes, but that was a circumstance to which he had thoroughly accustomed himself. To have done something sensational every day would have been to deprive sensations of their quality and value.

It was in consequence of one of his failures that Mr. Wilbraham Tweed called at the little house in Magnolia Street. The questions put at the close of the examination of the Marquis of Carabas at Bow

Street Police Court had seized upon a curiosity that was always tremulously awake. A relationship between Shelburne the Marquis and Shelburne the engineer had been suggested. Might not such a relationship be possible? Mr. Tweed had an enormous collection of scrap-books containing cuttings from newspapers. These gatherings of many years would have been simply bewildering to anyone else, but they were quite easy of reference to him. He took down a volume labelled 'Old Nobility.' Yes, there was what he wanted. Account of the death of the old Marquis of Carabas in church; squalid history of his successor; new Marquis's departure for the United States, death in Alaska, news sent home by a certain Marc Aurelius Tidd. What a perfect treasure Mr. Tidd must prove if he should only chance to be in London, where Americans were arriving by the score and the hundred.

Mr. Tweed had an American visitors'

list at hand, but no Marc Aurelius Tidd found mention therein. He referred to previous visitors' lists, extending some months back.

'By Jove!' he exclaimed, 'we have missed him.'

There, plainly enough, in fact, was the record: 'Mr. Marc Aurelius Tidd and Miss Celia Tidd, Hôtel Métropole.'

Mr. Tweed rang his bell. A minute thereafter he had sent a reporter to make inquiries.

'Gone to Japan,' was the intelligence he received.

Here was the first *cul-de-sac;* but Mr. Tweed was by no means disposed to abandon his investigation. Excepting for the Hyde Park trials, times were dull, and he despatched his most trusted interviewer to make inquiry of the counsel who had represented Bertie Shelburne and Jacob Dean.

'Was there anything in the suggested

relationship between the prisoner Shelburne and the Marquis of Carabas ?'

'Probably.'

'Would Mr. —— object to give some indication of what this relationship might be ?'

'Most decidedly.'

Cul-de-sac No. 2.

'Ah, then,' said Mr. Tweed, 'we must hunt up the relatives of these Deans and Shelburnes. Wasn't something said in the police court about Peppermint Hill ? Let me see. Oh yes ; Peppermint Hill, Clapham. You must go and see what you can find out at Peppermint Hill. Inquire of the neighbours only, and then report to me.'

These inquiries produced little, Mr. Tweed was bound to admit. Nobody had heard of or seen Bessie Shelburne's husband. An unneighbourly doubt existed in some households as to whether she had ever been married. But she had a son ! Well, other

unmarried women had sons—and daughters, too, sometimes. Practically, there was nothing further to be told. The Deans had, in the language of the neighbours, 'kept themselves to themselves.'

'Well, that will do, Thistleton,' said the editor of the *Drury Lane Review*. 'I shall take this matter up myself.'

In consequence of which resolution Mr. Tweed proceeded to Clapham on the very first occasion on which he permitted himself to feel that the world was for the present wound up to go.

He made no further outside inquiries, but went to Bessie Shelburne at once. He believed in the interview, when carried out by himself, as an instrument of torture that was infallible. A few scientific turns of the screw, and confession was inevitable.

Bessie turned a look of alarm on the thin, eager, confident, indifferently-dressed man who stood at the door. She was full of

apprehensions. She had an idea that a policeman might at any time come for herself; but that was not her main trouble. She exaggerated the danger of those whom she loved, and, having become accustomed to bad news, was in constant apprehension of further calamity.

'You are Mrs. Shelburne, I think?' said Mr. Tweed. 'I am the editor of the *Drury Lane Review*. I wish to have a little talk with you about your affairs. I may come in, I suppose?'

Mr. Tweed prided himself on never losing time in coming to the point. His emphatic, self-confident manner impressed Bessie without abating her alarm, and she asked him to step in.

'You mustn't be afraid of me, you know,' he said in his most reassuring manner, for he perceived the tremor she was in. 'I am aware that you have had sad trouble, and I have no wish to increase it, I am sure. You behold in me one who sympathizes deeply

with the great misfortunes of yourself and your family.'

Bessie's tears, always ready, came at call. The relief they brought was so great that anyone who furnished her with occasion for crying afresh was almost a benefactor.

Mr. Tweed clearly perceived the advantage he had gained. There was a certain genuineness in the sympathy that he professed, but he also congratulated himself on having got at this poor little woman's soft side.

'You will not object to answer a few questions, I feel certain,' he said.

'It depends what they are, sir,' replied Bessie, with an unaccustomed caution.

'They are rather delicate, I admit,' said Mr. Tweed; 'but I assure you that I have no end in view but your advantage. Do you object to tell me when you were married?'

'Yes, I do.'

'And when you lost your husband?'

'Yes.'

'But is not that unreasonable?'

'Maybe it is.'

'Now, come, Mrs. Shelburne. I have formed a theory; I will tell you what it is. Your son's father—shall I say your husband?' (Mr. Tweed made a conscious display of his talons here)—'was the late Marquis of Carabas, better known as Lord Bexley. He married you and left you, I suppose?'

Bessie rose to her feet.

'I don't know what right as you have to ask these questions,' she said. 'I don't know anything about you. I never heard of the *Review* as you speak about. My affairs is my own. I am in great trouble, and I am keeping it to myself. I can keep other things to myself, too. I have done it long enough, God knows!'

'But, my good woman——' said Mr. Tweed.

It was a more unfortunate expression than he was commonly liable to use. The dislike

of the poor to such phrases is usually misunderstood. It springs from a natural distaste for anything resembling patronage.

'I must beg you to know that I won't be called a "good woman" by you!' said Bessie, now red with anger.

The opportunity seemed so perfect that Mr. Tweed could not forbear to strike.

'Ah,' he said, 'I understand. Then you were not married, Mrs. Shelburne?'

Bessie had never been violently angry in her life. Her whole training had been in patient suffering. But now her anger took a form resembling violence. Her hands clenched for a moment, as if in desire of physical vengeance. Then she rushed to the door and threw it open.

'There,' she said, 'go!'

Mr. Wilbraham Tweed had come to another *cul-de-sac*. But the interview had not closed without possibility of copy. A 'sensation' might be created, even.

For Mr. Tweed reasoned thus: If Mrs.

Shelburne had not been married, she would not so have resented a suggestion to the contrary. She was not the sort of woman to 'brazen it out'; that was clear. A creature so obviously motherly, inexperienced, 'soft,' as the phrase goes, would in some way have shrunk on detection. Bessie had flamed up most unexpectedly. She had been married, therefore, whoever her husband might have been.

Further, if the suggestion about the Marquis of Carabas had been novel to her, she would have become curious at least, and perhaps excited when it was put forward with such bluntness; as it had stirred no emotion beyond a resolution to keep her lips closed, it was plain not only that she had heard of the matter before, but had been expecting to be 'pumped' on the subject.

There was evidently some such mystery here as that which he had conjectured. Mr. Tweed had not learned enough to go so far

as he would have liked, but still just enough to go some considerable way, and so, in the middle page of the *Drury Lane Review*, there appeared a much-leaded article with many sensational head-lines. It was in these terms :

'Some most remarkable facts have come to our knowledge with respect to one of the prisoners who is awaiting trial for participation in the Hyde Park riots. We do not think that it is as yet advisable to mention names ; but the particulars we have ascertained can, we believe, be relied upon.

'Some years back a nobleman of dignified title and large estates suddenly disappeared from public view. He had not long before succeeded to his father, whose death he was believed to have hastened by his wild and extravagant life. Proofs ultimately reached this country in an accidental and roundabout way of his death in a remote part of the American continent.

'It was believed that the nobleman in

question died unmarried, and the next heir, a politician of much promise and some eminence, succeeded to the title and estates. We have reason to believe, however, that a marriage had taken place some years before the deceased peer himself came into possession. The woman to whom he was married was of humble position. One son was born of the union, and this son, who is now awaiting his trial at the Old Bailey, is he true heir to one of the oldest titles and one of the richest estates in the kingdom. When his claims get into the courts, as they doubtless will, it will become our duty to report one of the most remarkable cases of recent times.'

And in this way Mr. Wilbraham Tweed fired the mine.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FIVE YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE.

'WISDOM,' says the proverb, 'is justified of her children.' Mr. Wilbraham Tweed remarked to himself on the profound truth of this Biblical statement when he witnessed the effect of what the *Drury Lane Review* now began to speak of as 'our disclosure.' Wisdom in his own person had contemplated the production of a sensational effect, and had been justified to an extent that Mr. Tweed could hardly have anticipated even in his most sanguine moments.

Of course there could be no doubt as to the persons indicated in Mr. Tweed's announcement, founded, as we have seen, on

nothing more than a shrewd guess. Beyond doubt, Bertie Shelburne, the rioter, and the Marquis of Carabas, present at the house of the Duke of Dundridge, on a certain critical occasion, for the purpose of repelling riot, were the persons principally concerned by Mr. Tweed's newest sensation.

'Well, this is a rum go!' said Lord Ronald Tunbridge, as he threw back his small person in one of the large lounging chairs of his favourite club, 'and deuced awkward for Carabas.'

'Pooh, pooh!' exclaimed Mr. Halliwell Romaine, who had already perused the *Drury Lane Review;* 'you don't suppose there's anything in that monstrous cock-and-bull story, do you?'

'There might be, you know,' rejoined Lord Ronald. 'Bexley was a confounded scoundrel. He was capable of anything, Bexley was.'

'Oh, we all know that! Capable of going through the form of marriage for a

dozen times, for instance ; capable of ruining a woman and leaving her, in which, perhaps, he was not so much out of the common ; but capable of marrying one of the common herd under his own name, and then of leaving her in possession of the means of identification, he certainly was not. Now, there was the late Lord Wooler,' he went on, launching into reminiscences, as his habit was. 'He had no more right to sit in the House of Lords than the waiter yonder. Father as big a scoundrel as Bexley, almost ; married a woman because he couldn't help it ; married again after a son had been born, first wife living. Well, if you believe me, that man successfully led two lives until he died. Son of one marriage, real heir to the title, was a farm hand in the country ; son of the other marriage, illegitimate, sat in the House of Lords to his death, where his son would be now sitting if Wooler had not been just as much averse to marriage as his

father had been prone to it; and so left no issue.'

'Why not hunt up the real lord, and let us have two sensations at one go?' asked one of the listeners to the story.

'No business of mine. He is probably a most respectable clodhopper—old he must be by now—but might make a deucedly disturbing member of the House of Lords.'

'Well, as to this fellow,' said Lord Ronald Tunbridge, 'he doesn't want any hunting up. He is on the spot. We shall probably know where to find him for some years to come.'

'I say,' chimed in Romaine, 'hadn't Carabas a gun in his hands when he saw the young fellow mount the Dundridge steps?'

'Yes, he had,' said Lord Ronald. 'You mean to suggest that it would have been a good thing if he had chanced to fire. Well, it would—for him.'

Society in general discussed the matter less gravely. It was merely another of the

empty sensations of the *Drury Lane Review*, or it was an imposture got up, on the strength of identity of names, for the purpose of annoying the Marquis of Carabas, who, some time before, had vehemently denounced the Socialist agitation in the House of Lords. Those who ventured to speak with the Marquis himself upon the subject were not numerous, and received very curt replies.

'Do? I shall begin to think what I shall do when it becomes necessary to do anything,' he said to one of his questioners; and it was perceived that he resented inquiry as impertinently curious.

But the stone which Mr. Wilbraham Tweed had set in motion went on bounding down-hill. Considerable sums poured into the office of the *Review* for the defence of Bertie Shelburne, 'or for the assertion of his rights,' said Mr. Tweed in acknowledging them.

'Society has not been shaken so much

during this generation,' he wrote in his journal, 'as by the revelation which it was our privilege to make some days ago ; nor has there been a case so extraordinary in the annals of the peerage. Everyone is acquainted with Carlyle's whimsical picture of a naked Duke of Windlestraw addressing a naked House of Lords ; but fancy a young man in the fustian of the workman, nay, in the broad-arrow-marked costume of the gaol, addressing the same dignified assembly, clothed and in its right mind ! Was there ever such a possibility before ? The gods must shake with laughter as they behold in anticipation the perturbation of the peers under such circumstances as these. To take a young man from the workman's bench—from the gaol, even—and seat him in the highest assembly in the land, among lords spiritual and temporal, among the possessors of ancient titles, and brewers and bankers recently ennobled, among those who are full of the pride of ancestry and those

who are puffed up with the worse pride of recent honours—this is what our disclosure, "the latest sensation of the *Drury Lane Review*," as it is scornfully but ignorantly called in some quarters, is about to do for Adelbert Shelburne, the rightful Marquis of Carabas.'

Mr. Tweed announced in another part of his newspaper that the working men had energetically taken up Bertie's case. 'Shelburne Societies' were being formed, with subscriptions at a penny a week, for the purpose of pressing the young man's claims to the peerage. Numerous letters were published with the view of showing how wide was the interest that had been awakened.

'Sir,' said one of these, 'I am a pore man, but I send thrippence to help young Shelburne to get his rights, as are kept from him by the arrystockracy. What I say is, Down with the House of Lords!'

This epistle naturally created much

amusement in the club which Lord Ronald frequented.

'What I like, above all things,' said Romaine, 'is the logic of the British workman. He would abolish aristocrats, but he subscribes his threepence to make an aristocrat out of a young engineer, who also, it would appear, happens to be a criminal. He insists on the rights of the "pore," which, it seems, include peerages. He says, "Down with your dibs, in order to turn something that I respects into something that I despises." Could anything be more sweetly reasonable?'

'Oh, we had the same thing with the other Claimant, you know,' a member observed. 'If he hadn't been a poor butcher from Wagga-Wagga he would have got the baronetcy. That was the line of argument. Why, there are Tichborne associations still in existence, for what purpose heaven knows. I saw one in the act of indulging in a procession the other day—

twelve processionists, two bandsmen, and a flag.'

'We shall have the riot trials in a day or two,' remarked Lord Ronald Tunbridge, 'and then we shall see what the young fellow's counsel makes out of it. I suppose he will work this business into his defence somehow.'

'Not if old Huskisson can help it, I'll be bound,' said Tony Alderson, who, notwithstanding his accession to a fortune and his incapacity to obtain briefs, still made a pretence of attending the courts. 'Huskisson is to hear these cases, you know, and he may be trusted to stand no nonsense of that sort.'

In which surmise Tony Alderson was abundantly justified. Jacob Dean had confided to counsel the full particulars of Bessie's marriage, and Bessie had herself been examined on the subject. The precious bundle of letters and a copy of the marriage certificate were now in counsel's hands. The latter document had been compared with the original and found correct.

It had been deemed necessary to secure a second copy, indeed, lest the register should be tampered with when its great importance became known.

Bertie Shelburne had himself, of course, been made acquainted with the whole of the facts and surmises in the case. He found his new knowledge much more painful than pleasant. The discovery of who and what his father had been was inevitably disagreeable. A new pity for his mother possessed him. How brave that weak little woman had been, in spite of her weaknesses! What she must have borne, how she must have slaved, for his sake! how hard it must have been for her not to tell him anything about his father! What, in such a position as he now found himself, was it possible for him to do? His small experience of life furnished him with no answer to that question, except one. It could not be right for him to take advantage of the new circumstances in the hope of escaping from

the life he had lived. He would meet without flinching, and in the character that he had always borne, the false charges that were brought against him, and that were supported by perjured men. To stand his trial as Bertie Shelburne, the engineer —this he was resolutely determined upon. It should not be pleaded that he was some other person, kept out of his rights. He had done nothing that should have brought him within reach of the law, nothing that the law ought not to have approved of, and whatever he might be he would stand by his past.

Bertie was strongly opposed, therefore, to any attempt to make use of his supposed origin in the forthcoming trial. His uncle Jacob was just as resolute on the other side. He had wanted to keep Bertie in ignorance of the facts; but that was before the Hyde Park affair, and especially before the evidence of the Marquis of Carabas. Now, although he was not solicitous to put Bertie

up, he was determined to pull the Marquis down, and so the legal men employed on his side were pressed to raise the Carabas claims.

But the judge would hear nothing of that. He was watchful at every moment against the dragging in of matter that did not absolutely relate to the case. He had read the newspapers, of course, and he was convinced that these claims were a bad sort of imposture, intended to impede the natural operation of the law. A severe judge always, he was more than usually vigilant and peremptory upon this occasion. When, in the concluding speech, counsel diverged into a consideration of the peculiar position of Bertie Shelburne, a possible Marquis of Carabas, he was interrupted at once.

'Do you think that will help your case, Mr. So-and-So?' the judge inquired.

'They are considerations that, in my opinion, ought to be placed before the court, my lord.'

'Oh, I think not, I think not,' said the judge. 'They are considerations which ought to come before another court. We are concerned here with the prisoner's criminality only.'

Obviously, nothing further on that subject could be profitably said after this expression of judicial opinion ; but the incident seemed to those in court to have prejudiced the judge against the prisoners. In his summing up he made reference to the claims that had been put forward on the younger Shelburne's behalf. The jury, he said, could not have failed to read the newspapers. They must be aware that a pretence was being set up on behalf of the younger prisoner to be the real Marquis of Carabas. That was a matter with which he and the jury had nothing to do. He must ask each individual juryman to clear his mind of any prepossessions in that respect. It was a matter for a quite different tribunal. What they had to con-

sider was whether the prisoners had broken the law. The evidence seemed very conclusive on one side. There had been nothing but evidence as to character on the other. It might be made to appear, from what they had heard, that Jacob Dean and Bertie Shelburne were very earnest, very well-intentioned men; but there could be little doubt that they were also much misguided. It was for the jury to say whether or not they had been criminal in their intentions and their acts. For his part, he must say that the pretence which had been set up on behalf of the younger prisoner, on the strength of what appeared to be no more than newspaper gossip, was not calculated to strengthen his claims upon them. Even if all that were alleged on that head were true, they would still be bound, as honest jurymen, to bring in their verdict on the facts of the case. There was not one law for the rich and another for the poor. Even if the younger prisoner were unquestionably what

he was set forward as being, he would still have to take the responsibility of his acts. Social position exonerated no man, if he had broken the laws of his country.

The jury was a good, shopkeeping London jury, and brought in a verdict of guilty.

'I shall not distinguish between the two prisoners,' said the judge. 'There are circumstances which in ordinary cases might have induced me to do so. It might have been pleaded that Shelburne, being the younger man, had acted under the influence of Dean; but no such plea has been put forward. On the other hand, Shelburne, in bringing forward an insubstantial claim with the purpose of prejudicing this trial, has proved that he is not the least dangerous criminal of the two. My sentence on each is that he be sent to penal servitude for five years.'

END OF VOL. II.

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